DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 258 452 FL 015 061

TITLE Cross Currents: A Journal of Language Teaching and Cross-Cultural Communication. Volume XI, Number 2, Fall 1984.
INSTITUTION Language Inst. of Japan, Odawara.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 86p.; For an earlier volume, see ED 248 728.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Cross Currents; v11 n2 Fall 1984

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Audiotape Recordings; Book Reviews; Business Communication; *Classroom Communication; *Classroom Environment; *Classroom Techniques; *Cross Cultural Training; *English (Second Language); English for Special Purposes; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Oral Language; Persuasive Discourse; *Second Language Instruction; Testing

ABSTRACT

This issue of a biannual journal for interdisciplinary exchange of ideas within the areas of communication, language skills acquisition and instruction, and cross-cultural training and learning includes these articles: "Oral Interactive Testing at a Japanese University" (Eloise Pearson); "Classroom Organisation and the Teacher" (Armand Hughes-d'Aeth); "Using an Unrehearsed Tape for Student-Directed Language Learning" (Patrick Blanche); "Your Breads, Wines, and Cheeses: A Look at English Countability" (Donna J. Brigman); "Argumentation and Audience" (Daniel Horowitz); "Teaching Spoken English in Japan" (Tomoo Tsukamoto); "Using Popularity Contests in ESL/EFL" (Michael Redfield); "Business English Skills: The Evaluation Meeting" (Brian C. Tobin); and "'Rhythm' in the EFL Class" (Michiko Shinohara). A book review is also included. (MSE)

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A Journal of
Language Teaching and Cross-Cultural Communication
Volume XI, Number 2, Fall 1984

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Cross Currents
発行所 ©LANGUAGE INSTITUTE OF JAPAN
発行人 浅沢雅英 〒250 神奈川県小田原市城山4-14-1 ☎(0465)23-1677
印刷所 グローバル・エンジニアズ 〒162 東京都新宿区矢来町115 東海神楽坂ビル※302

FL 015 061

ABOUT *CROSS CURRENTS*

Cross Currents is a biannual journal published by the Language Institute of Japan in an effort to contribute to an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas within the areas of communication, language skills acquisition and instruction, and cross-cultural training and learning. We are especially interested in articles on: 1) Language teaching and learning, especially regarding English as a Second/Foreign Language and English as an International Language; 2) Language teaching and learning as they apply to the situation in Japan; and 3) Cross-cultural communication issues. We also welcome reviews of recently published books in these areas.

Cross Currents was first published in 1972 with an emphasis on Japan and Japanese students of English. In order to serve the needs of our growing international readership better, we strive to publish articles concerned with teaching methodologies, techniques, and general issues which are multicultural rather than culture-specific. While articles demonstrating solid and thoughtful research are greatly appreciated, always kept in mind is the necessity for readability and practicality for our readers, the classroom teachers. We make every effort to balance abstract and theoretical articles with articles directly applicable to the classroom. Short practical articles are featured in our Bright Ideas section.

* * *

All articles submitted for consideration should be typed, double-spaced, and in duplicate, with references placed in the body of the text in parentheses with the author's last name, date of the work cited, and page number. Footnotes on substantive matters should appear at the bottom of the page on which the footnote occurs. Please include: 1) a paragraph precis of the article, 2) a short biographical sketch, and 3) a bibliography which should conform with *TESOL Quarterly* style. Manuscripts should be 5–20 pages in length. Authors of articles accepted for publication will receive twenty reprints.

Please direct all manuscript correspondence to:

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Summaries of the Articles

Oral Interactive Testing at a Japanese University
Eloise Pearson

The goals and objectives for English conversation classes in Japanese universities are usually quite broad; for example, the overall improvement of the learners' conversational competence in English. When a communicative approach is taken to the design and teaching of such classes an evaluation system which reflects this approach is necessary. In this article, the author begins with a very brief historical perspective of language testing, and outlines several types of common oral tests. She then describes a specific testing situation at one Japanese university. The reactions to this test by the testees and the tester are noted, and the questions of reliability, validity, and practicability, as they relate to the testing situation described, are discussed. The article concludes that oral interactive testing is a very important and interesting direction for the future of language testing and evaluation, although there are still a number of problems associated with it.

Classroom Organisation and The Teacher
Armand Hughes-d'Aeth

Classroom organisation should be an important consideration for all teachers at all levels when planning a lesson, a term's activities or a year's schedule. After a brief look at the role of the teacher and its implications for classroom organisation, the author deals with suggested seating arrangements for classwork and group work as well as the advantages of group work. He then discusses advantages and problems of mixed ability and divided ability groups and gives some basic advice on handling slow learners in mixed ability groups and working with group leaders. Finally, suggestions are made for classroom procedure when working with groups. Diagrams accompany suggested seating arrangements.

Using an Unrehearsed Tape for Student-Directed Language Learning
Patrick Blanche

Unrehearsed tapes are multipurpose teaching instruments. They can be used either to promote the students' general understanding of a conversation carried on at normal speed, or to help the students to focus their attention on discrete parts of speech without sacrificing the authenticity of the language they hear. In this article, the author mentions some of the ways in which unrehearsed tapes can be used. He also discusses their advantages and disadvantages. He then proceeds to describe an activity in which unrehearsed tapes are used and which he himself developed.

Your Breads, Wines, and Cheeses: A Look at English Countability
Donna J. Brigman

The binary count/noncount system which is so often employed in ESL texts leaves a large and well-used area of English unaccounted for. Although linguistic analysis of countability is reasonable, the version offered students is simplified to the point where the distinctions are no longer true. This article outlines a system which will strike a compromise between the scanty, if not misleading, traditional system and what might be for students an overwhelming linguistic analysis. The author proposes that nouns receive their distinction of countability from the environment which they are in at a particular moment in time. As nouns move from one environment to another, their countability distinction may change.

Argumentation and Audience
Daniel Horowitz

A clearly defined sense of audience is a necessary prerequisite for the production of cogent argumentative discourse. Intermediate and advanced ESL students can develop this sense through the unit proposed here, the main activity of which is an oral argumentative presentation which leads to the writing of an argumentative essay. At every step, students are guided by sets of questions which direct their attention to the needs and expectations of the audience they are addressing.

Teaching Spoken English in Japan
Tomoo Tsukamoto

Outlining the general environment one finds in teaching spoken English in Japan, this article focuses on Japanese cultural concepts concerning the use of foreign languages and on Japanese attitudes towards foreign language speakers. It also discusses the grammar-language-communication equation in an attempt to explain the notoriously poor communication skills among the Japanese. Then it presents a historical perspective of the English language in Japan: British English, American English, and international English.

Bright Ideas

Using Popularity Contests in ESL/EFL
Michael "Rube" Redfield

Popularity contests of one type or another are held in most countries. In England and South America there are the Soccer Pools, while in America, there are the Oscar, Emmy, and Grammy Awards. Baseball is one of the most well-liked sports in Japan and the selection of All-Star Teams by the public for the midsummer All-Star Games is a popular activity among sports fans. In this Bright Idea, the author shows how to adapt the All-Star Balloting activity for use in the classroom and suggests other activities which can be similarly adapted for classroom use.

Business English Skills: The Evaluation Meeting
Brian C. Tobin

The activity described in this Bright Idea is based on the "quality circle" approach to problem solving. In the quality circle, a small group of participants meet to share ideas on a particular topic or problem, evaluate the various aspects and components of it, and propose solutions or recommendations for future action. The author shows how this approach can be used effectively in the classroom.

Rhythm in the EFL Class
Michiko Shinohara

Rhythm is a children's game which is played in America. It is also played by Japanese children and is called *Osama to Kojiki* (King and Beggar). This Bright Idea presents its effective application in EFL classes in Japan. Some advantages of its use are pointed out, and several variations are introduced to make the class more fun or easier to handle.

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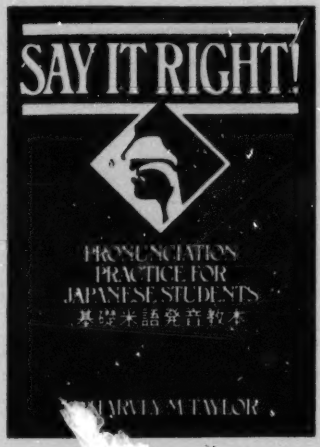

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

With the publication of this issue, we would like to thank Andrew Blasky for his three years of service as an editor of *Cross Currents*. With Andy's guidance, *Cross Currents* has become a respected source of ideas for ESL teachers around the world. Through his hard work and his dedication to maintaining high standards, he has helped to build a strong foundation upon which the journal can continue to expand and reach an ever-growing readership. We would like to wish him luck on his return to the United States. He will be greatly missed by the rest of the editorial staff.

This issue also marks the arrival of many newcomers to the *Cross Currents* editorial board. We would like to welcome them and also to thank them for the time and effort they put into preparing this issue.

The articles and Bright Ideas in this issue have been carefully selected to create a mix of ideas which will be of interest to the classroom teacher. As in past issues, these contributions have come from all corners of the globe, and reflect the truly international scope of English language teaching. The article by Eloise Pearson, "Oral Interactive Testing at a Japanese University," describes one teacher's approach to the problem of testing and evaluation when a communicative approach was taken to the design and teaching of classes in a Japanese university. The author begins with a brief historical perspective of language testing and then reviews several types of common oral tests. This is followed by a description of a specific testing situation at one Japanese university, and the reactions to this test by the testees and tester. The questions of reliability, validity, and practicability, as they relate to the testing situation described, are also discussed.

The article by Armand Hughes-d'Aeth, "Classroom Organisation and the Teacher," has been reprinted from the *ELTIC Reporter*, a South African journal for teachers of ESL. Although it has not been our practice to reprint articles from other journals, we feel that the topic is of considerable interest to many teachers and that the checklists of do's and don'ts regarding group work and seating arrangements will be particularly useful.

In "Argumentation and Audience," by Daniel Horowitz, the need for intermediate and advanced ESL/EFL students to develop

a clearly defined sense of audience is addressed. Horowitz suggests that one way to achieve awareness of one's audience is through activities which require argumentative and persuasive styles of discourse. The questions he provides for the students to consider are designed to make them more responsive to the expectations of their audience.

In "Your Breads, Wines, and Cheeses: A Look at English Countability," Donna Brigman takes a look at the count/noncount system of nouns in English and proposes a simple yet comprehensive analysis of the system. According to Brigman, nouns derive their count/noncount status from the environment in which they appear; a noun may be classified as count when used in one particular environment, and noncount when used in a different environment. Brigman's analysis makes use of a "sluice box" to help students determine the kind of environment in which a noun appears, and its subsequent countability status.

In "Using an Unrehearsed Tape for Student-Directed Language Learning," Patrick Blanche takes a look at the place of unrehearsed tapes in the classroom. He mentions some of the ways that they can be used and talks about the advantages and disadvantages of using them. He then describes an activity involving unrehearsed tapes which he himself has successfully used several times.

The article by Tomoo Tsukamoto, "Some Problems of Teaching Spoken English in Japan," will be of value to those who teach in Japan, or who are considering it for the future. Tsukamoto feels that some of the communication problems which Japanese speakers of English often experience are the result of cultural and psychological barriers to language learning rather than of weaknesses in linguistic areas. Tsukamoto suggests that if a Japanese variation of English as an International Language were acknowledged in Japan, and if English were regarded as a real tool for communication, rather than a set of grammar rules to be studied, many Japanese would feel more self-assured when communicating with foreigners in English. Ultimately, it will be the responsibility of the English teacher to help students come to these realizations.

Although quite different in content and approach, the three Bright Ideas contained in this issue emphasize the importance of group work in classroom situations. Two of them make use of games in the EFL classroom: "Using Popularity Contests in EFL/ESL" by Michael Redfield suggests an activity which involves

popularity contests and which can help students to develop a more effective persuasive style; "*Rhythm* in the ESL Class" by Michiko Shinohara is an activity which can improve pronunciation and remove tension in the classroom. The Bright Idea concerning student evaluation meetings by Brian Tobin is appropriate for a business English curriculum, although it can be adapted to other courses as well. Finally, this issue contains a review of *Faces*, a new text designed for English conversation classes by Andrew Blasky and Elizabeth Chafcouloff.

Choosing articles for publication from the many manuscripts we receive is never an easy task, and the selections made are always the result of long and careful consideration by our editorial board. We hope that the articles in this issue prove to be as interesting and useful to our readers as they have been for those of us here who worked on them.

Cross Currents
V. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Oral Interactive Testing at a Japanese University

Eloise Pearson

English Conversation classes in Japanese universities frequently have from thirty to fifty learners in a class. The goals and objectives for such classes, as laid out by the universities, are usually quite broad and general; for example, the overall improvement of the learners' conversational competence in English. When a communicative approach is taken to the design and teaching of such classes, an evaluation system which reflects this communicative approach to language use would seem natural. However, there still exists a considerable imbalance between the available teaching resources and testing instruments within such a communicative approach to language use. This article presents one teacher's method of dealing with that imbalance.

Language Testing: A Historical Perspective

According to Morrow, language testing can be divided historically into three stages: 1) The Garden of Eden, 2) The Vale of Tears, and 3) The Promised Land (1979:144 and 150). Spolsky has described these same stages as "pre-scientific," "psychometric-structuralist," and "psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic" (1975:18).

The first stage, "The Garden of Eden" or the "pre-scientific" stage, was influenced by classical language instruction, that is, grammar translation. Language was viewed as a thing in itself and real language existed only in texts. Therefore, spoken language was not important. Moreover, there was no direct concern with learner needs, and assessment was subjective with few or no guidelines.

Eloise Pearson has an M.A. in TEFL from the University of Hawaii. She has taught in Japan for thirteen years and is an EFL instructor at Sophia University in Tokyo.

Morrow's second stage, "The Vale of Tears"–described by Spolsky as "psychometric-structuralist"–started when the Second World War touched off an interest in spoken language in the U.S. Behaviorist psychology (cf. Skinner 1957) taught that all behavior was the result of habit formation, and since language was a part of human behavior, language could be learned by the formation of new linguistic habits. The Audio-Lingual Method, as it developed during the 1960's, emphasized the spoken as opposed to the written language. Furthermore, language was broken down into isolated segments and "language learning was viewed as a process of accretion" (Morrow 1979:145). Knowledge of the elements of a language was thought to be equivalent to knowledge of the language itself so that testing could be carried out by testing the learners' knowledge of discrete language points. Objective assessment, reliability, and validity became very important for test construction.

Morrow calls the third and final stage "The Promised Land," while Spolsky calls it the "psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic" stage. This grew out of Austin's (1975) and Searle's (1969) concern for what people do with spoken language along with Hymes' (1971) concern for communicative competence. In addition, the growing recognition of the importance of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis also contributed to an interest in performance as opposed to proficiency testing. The purpose of testing became the determination of "how successful the candidate is likely to be as a user of the language in some general sense" (Morrow 1979:151); this means testing which measures a learner's competence and performance and reflects a concern for the learner's needs in specific situations.

Common Oral Tests: An Overview

As a result of this focus on competence and performance there has been considerable interest in oral interactive testing. Three types of oral interactive tests are common: the reading aloud/oral comprehension test, the interview test, and the role-play test. The goals of the first type are the comprehension of a written text, the ability to answer oral questions based on that text, and formal accuracy. It involves a testee, a tester, and perhaps an additional assessor. The testee reads the passage aloud and answers the tester's oral questions. The focus is on the text.

The second type of oral interactive test, the interview, aims at testing overall performance, that is, the ability to comprehend 'normal' speech and answer questions, the ability to use language in relation to topic, and the ability to handle specific structures and unexpected shifts. It involves a testee, a tester, and an additional assessor. The tester asks questions and the testee provides the answers. The focus is on topic.

The third type is the role play which aims at testing the learner's ability to use language appropriately within a specific setting, effectiveness in attaining the goal of the interaction, ability to handle specific structures and unexpected shifts, and of course, the ability to play the role convincingly. Usually, this involves more than one testee and one or two testers whose function it is to assess the performance. In practice, the testees each perform a different role, and the focus is on the setting. One of the obvious problems with this type of test is whether one is in reality assessing the learner's competence in the language or his or her acting ability.

One Approach to Communicative Oral Testing in a Japanese University

The rest of this paper will describe a specific testing situation at a Japanese university where a communicative approach was taken to the syllabus design and the teaching of the classes involved. There were several aims in designing a testing instrument in this situation. The first was to determine the learners' ability to be full participants in a linguistic interaction. The second was to assess their ability to use language that is appropriate for a particular situation. The next aim was to determine their ability to effectively accomplish a task within a realistic time period, and finally, to determine their ability to use the forms, structures, expressions, and vocabulary which were covered in the course and which related to the task at hand.

In addition, a testing instrument had to be formulated which could accomplish these goals for four classes of fifty students, each of which meets for one and a half hours twice a week. (Ideally, all the testing should be accomplished within one week or three class hours.) Moreover, only one teacher was available as a tester. This meant that the teacher had to be free to assess only, and so could not be a participant in any of the interactions.

It was decided that a role-play type of oral interactive test best suited the aims and conditions of this particular testing/evaluation situation. Ideally, of course, there should be a pre-test and a post-test with at least two assessors for each test, neither tester being the teacher. However, in this case, as in many university situations, constraints on time and personnel make these ideals unrealistic.

In answer to the problem of assessing language performance as opposed to performance of a role, it was decided to formulate task-situations which would allow the learners to play themselves in situations which could possibly occur in a Japanese university student's life. (An example of one of the role-play tasks is given in Appendix 1.) In addition, task-situations were formulated which necessitated the use of functions and vocabulary which had been studied and practiced in class in similar group interactive situations. Care was taken to ensure that no one task-situation was more difficult than any of the others and that each situation had to involve verbal interaction for the accomplishment of the task. At the same time, it was necessary that the students be able to accomplish the task within the ten-minute time period allotted to each testee group.

For efficiency, it was decided that three testees would be tested together as an interactive group. The tester was to remain outside of the interaction in order to devote full attention to assessing the performance. Therefore, for each of the three testees in the group, instructions had to be written which clearly defined the situation, the task, and the specific role that each testee was to play in accomplishing the task. This meant writing instructions for three roles for each of the task-situations.

Criteria specifying the minimum performance levels in each of four categories—grammar, pronunciation/intonation, vocabulary, and comprehension—were drawn up and arranged in a hierarchical scale of importance. In addition, three basic criteria were outlined which superseded the above four categories. They were: 1) the student can create with the language, that is, can make his or her own sentences independently of the vocabulary and structures of the other speaker; 2) the interaction is intelligible to a native speaker used to interacting with Japanese speakers of English; and 3) the assigned task is completed within the allotted time. These criteria were used by the tester as the pass/fail criteria for each testee.

A system of grading was also drawn up which outlined the criteria used in evaluating levels higher than that of simple passing.

It was decided that in addition to individual grades for each testee, each interactive group of three testees should also receive a grade. This group grade was to be as important as the individual's grade. The purpose was to ensure intragroup cooperation and equal speaking time for all the members (see Appendix 3).

Each testee was to be informed of the two grades assigned to him or her and of both the good and bad aspects of his or her performance. This was done by providing the testees with index cards on the day of the test and having them write their names on the cards which were given to the tester just prior to the test. The tester then used these cards for writing notes about the performance of each testee and for giving each one his or her grades.

Two weeks before the tests were to begin the learners were informed of the type of test, the reason for the type of test, the evaluation and grading systems, the directions for the procedure on the day of the test, and the rules for the test. The learners were all free to choose their own group members and to arrange their own fifteen-minute test period within the overall scheduled time. Additionally, each group was responsible for its own members being present and being on time.

On the day of the test, each group met outside the testing room a few minutes before their appointed test time. They read the rules posted on the door, quietly entered the back of the room, and picked up an index card. Then each of the three proceeded to a different table marked A, B or C, sat down, wrote his or her name on the index card, and read the situation/role card on the top of the pile. They had fifteen minutes from the time they entered the room until their allotted testing time in which to think about the situation/role. They could use a dictionary but they could not communicate with one another. At the scheduled time, each of the three came forward to the front of the room, gave the index cards and the situation/role cards to the tester, asked the tester any questions about the role, sat down facing each other at the table and began their verbal encounter according to the situation. At the end of the allotted ten minutes, the discussion ended whether or not the task had been completed, and the group left the classroom. The tester then had about five minutes to finish the grading and the notes on each testee's card before the next group came forward.

When all the groups had finished, the tester looked over all the notes and noted down some of the overall areas in which the testees

had performed well. Some of the more problematic areas were also noted. The next time the class met, the teacher told them both what the class as a whole had done well and what it had done badly. The index cards with the two grades and the performance notes were then passed out to each learner. The areas that had been problematic for the class in general were incorporated as review into the syllabus for the next semester.

Reactions to the Test

Generally speaking, the testees were pleased with their efforts and felt that their English had been tested. Not one of them failed the test. This was not because the criteria were too easy, but because, as the testees indicated afterwards, they felt they had known exactly what had been expected of them and that those expectations had been realistic in light of what they had been studying during the semester. It was obvious that they had all studied. They had known that not only would their own grade be affected, but that that of the entire group would also be affected.

Before the test, everyone was nervous, but once they started their task, they became involved with the situation, relaxed, and appeared to actually have fun. Afterwards, they indicated that this was indeed the case. By interacting with each other, rather than with the teacher/tester, they did not feel so shy and inhibited. Their interactions were marked by a noticeable willingness to communicate, spontaneity, and experimentation.

For many of them, this was the first time that English had actually seemed like a tool for meaningful communication. There were several cases where learners who had appeared quiet, listless, and uninterested in English during the semester suddenly realized that they actually could communicate in English. They are now some of the most attentive and actively interested learners in their classes. Some of them who had not previously planned to go abroad during the summer holidays changed their plans and went as a result of the test.

As far as the tester was concerned, some of the most striking results of the test were the wealth of language it produced and the positive attitudes it generated in the testees to both that type of test and to the English language.

Reliability, Validity, and Practicability

According to Clark, a direct test—defined as one in which the testing format and procedure attempts to duplicate the setting and

operation of the real-life situations in which proficiency is normally demonstrated—must meet three requirements: 1) it must have face or content validity; 2) it must provide consistent, replicable information about student performance; and 3) it must be within acceptable limits of cost, manpower requirements, and time constraints for administration and scoring in order to be practical (1975:10–12).

Davies has outlined the five types of validity a language test may claim to have:

Face	:	The test looks like a good one.
Content	:	The test accurately reflects the syllabus on which it is based.
Predictive	:	The test accurately predicts performance in some subsequent situation.
Concurrent	:	The test gives similar results to existing tests which have already been validated.
Construct	:	The test reflects accurately the principles of a valid theory of foreign language learning.

(1968:8)

Morrow, however, claims:

> There is clearly no such thing in testing as 'absolute' validity. Validity exists only in terms of specified criteria, and if the criteria turn out to be the wrong ones, then validity claimed in terms of them turns out to be spurious. (1978:147)

He points out that the types of validity mentioned by Davies are all ultimately circular, with the exception of *Face* and possibly *Predictive*. He explains that when one starts "from a certain set of assumptions about the nature of language and language learning [this] will lead to language tests which are perfectly valid in terms of these assumptions, but whose value must inevitably be called into question if the basic assumptions themselves are challenged." Therefore, if the construct of the underlying language theory, the content of the syllabus, or the other language tests against which the theory is validated are not related to the learner's performance in using the language, then a test which is valid for those criteria may fail to show in any interesting way how well a candidate can perform in or use the target language.

In the oral interactive test, the syllabus was 'communicative' based, and every effort was made to construct task-situations which

would test what the learners had been learning through the syllabus. In addition, both the learners and the tester felt it had face validity.

Morrow states that a test of communicative ability will be crucially concerned to establish its own validity as a measure of those operations it claims to measure. Thus content, construct, and predictive validity will be important, but concurrent validity with existing tests will not be necessarily significant (1978:150).

Reliability is an extremely complex issue in communicative oral testing. The basis of the reliability claimed by Lado is objectivity (1961). Robinson identifies three areas of difference between testing types which have been designed to produce data to be objectively assessed and those which call for more subjective evaluation:

1) The amount of language produced by the testee. In an objective test, the testees may produce no language at all. They may be limited to selecting alternatives rather than actually producing language;

2) Therefore, the type of ability being tested is different. In a subjective test, the testees' ability to produce language is an important factor, while in an objective test the ability to recognize appropriate forms is sufficient;

3) The norms of language use are established on different grounds. In an objective test the testees must base their responses on the language of the examiner, while in a subjective testing situation, the norms may be their own, deriving from their own use of the language. (1973:3)

These three factors lead to what Davies has called the "reliability-validity tension" (1978:10). Morrow states that for tests of communicative ability such "reliability while clearly important, will be subordinate to face validity. Spurious objectivity will no longer be a prime consideration, although it is recognized that in certain situations test formats which can be assessed mechanically will be advantageous" (1978:151).

Certain questions can then be asked about this test. For example, were all the task-situations comparable in that they required the testees to do the same sort of thing? An attempt was made to do so with task-situations which were familiar to the testees and required them to use the language studied during the semester.

Was the grading reliable? This is problematic when there is only one assessor. The purpose and use of the grading criteria given in Appendixes 2 and 3 were to create more reliability here. When the only assessor is also the teacher, subjectivity is another major problem in scoring. Again the hierarchical listing of the grading criteria was helpful as was the fact that the assessor was not a participant in the interaction. The latter allowed for keener observation and, it is hoped, greater objectivity in evaluation. In any event, if factors such as being a good listener, making use of gestures and tone of voice, being logical and sticking to a point, are factors influencing the effectiveness of communication in real life, then perhaps they should not be separated from strictly linguistic factors in communicative oral testing (Valette 1967:144).

In terms of practicability, this type of test is quite successful. It did require a certain amount of time and work to design; however, once the groundwork was laid the administration was fairly simple and straightforward. Additionally, because the tester was not a participant, it was found that the tester could test for a much longer period without fatigue. And since three testees were all interacting together and doing all the talking, a greater number of testees could be tested within the same amount of time.

Conclusion

Oral interactive testing of the type described in this paper does not correspond perfectly to rigid categories, clear-cut standards, and absolute replicability. It is in this sense a reflection of the complexity of language itself in real-life communication (Lombardo 1984:6). Even though there are problems associated with this type of testing, it is clearly a very important and interesting direction for the testing of language. Lombardo expresses it very well when she says:

> Such tests serve to reinforce the kind of teaching/learning situation where creativity and experimentation are encouraged and the student is made aware that, ultimately, the responsibility for his learning is in his own hands. (1984:4)

APPENDIX 1

A Role-Play Task

A New Club

A new club will be formed at this university. What kind of club should it be? What should be the name of the club, the activities of the club?

The three of you must decide the three points listed above.

Tell the other two your own ideas, find out their ideas, discuss them and make a final decision. Together, make a list of the club's activities.

APPENDIX 2

Minimum Performance Levels

Basic Criteria:

Can create with the language, that is, can make his or her own sentences independently of the vocabulary and structures of the other speaker.

Intelligible to a native speaker used to interacting with Japanese speakers of English.

Can accomplish the limited task assigned within the limited time allotted.

Grammar

1) *Effectiveness:* Able to achieve goal of task although with obvious difficulties;

2) *Accuracy:* Can be understood by a native speaker used to speaking with Japanese speaking English;

3) *Range:* Present tenses: simple and progressive, (limited) simple future, past.

Structures introduced and practiced in class.

Other basic structures although with some errors;

4) *Fluency:* Able to keep communication going through to the end of the task although marked by pauses, hesitations, false starts, groping, etc. (not yet self-correcting).

Note: Range is low so accuracy of what is used is important.

Pronunciation/Intonation

1) *Effectiveness:* Can accomplish goal of task but with obvious problems;

2) *Accuracy:* Can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with Japanese speakers of English;

3) *Range:* Basic question and statement intonation. Can occasionally use stress and intonation for emphasis or to clarify meaning;

4) *Fluency:* Some unnaturally long pauses, false starts, hesitations, groping. Occasional lapses into Japanese hesitation markers.

Vocabulary

1) *Effectiveness:* Able to achieve goal of task although with some difficulty;

2) *Range:* Vocabulary practiced in class and other basic vocabulary;
3) *Accuracy:* Items covered in class should be accurate. Other basic vocabulary may be used with some errors;
4) *Fluency:* Should be beginning to self-correct. Should be beginning to be able to rephrase ideas although with much difficulty (not yet true circumlocution).

Note: Range more important than accuracy because rephrasing has started.

Comprehension

1) *Effectiveness:* Able to achieve goal of task although with some difficulty;
2) *Accuracy:* Judging from the relevancy of responses made, most of what is said by an interlocutor who is a member of the same group of learners, can be understood by the listener;
2) *Fluency:* Can indicate lack of comprehension by simple clarification checks, interruptions, requests for repetition, although marked by many errors;
4) *Range:* Limited to the task at hand, that is, topic, vocabulary, structures, and so on.

Note: Accuracy and Fluency are both #2 on the scale because they are equally important.

APPENDIX 3

Grading

Individual Learners

1 = unsatisfactory/failing
2 = just barely satisfactory/passing
3 = good/passing
4 = very good/passing

Since 2, 3, and 4 are all passing the basic performance criteria, these levels are differentiated by four extension criteria (2 content-related, 2 performance-related):

Quantity of Communication: The amount of relevant information the learner succeeded in conveying.

Quality of Communication: The complexity and appropriateness of the learner's utterances.

Accuracy: The correctness of the learner's utterances above the minimum criteria outlined for Grammar, Pronunciation/Prosody, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.

Fluency: The overall smoothness, continuity, and naturalness of the learner's speech above the minimum criteria outlined for Grammar, Pronunciation/Prosody, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.

Interactive Groups

In addition to an individual grade, each group receives a grade. This is to ensure that the learners try to help each other to accomplish the task within the assigned time period, and that one student does not dominate the interaction.

1 = unsatisfactory/failing. Task not accomplished within allotted time period
2 = just barely satisfactory/passing
3 = good/passing
4 = very good/passing

Extension criteria for levels 2, 3, and 4:

Quantity of Communication: The amount of balanced relevant information the learners exchange during the interaction.

Quality of Communication: The complexity and appropriateness of the interaction moves and the amount of contribution made by both interlocutors to that effect.

Accuracy: The correctness of the overall exchange and of the contributions made by both speakers to upgrade the overall accuracy.

Fluency: The overall smoothness, continuity, and naturalness of the exchange, and the contributions made by both speakers to that effect.

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Cross Currents
Vol. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Classroom Organisation and The Teacher

Armand Hughes-d'Aeth

The basis of this article arose from an ELT methodology programme aimed at teachers in Lower and Higher Primary schools carried out in the East Rand. The basic aim of our programme was to devise means by which oral fluency activities could be implemented. The importance of classroom management soon became apparent and time was spent with teachers discussing aspects of the problem and devising ways to overcome them.

Classroom organisation should be an important consideration for all teachers at all levels when planning a lesson, a term's activities or a year's schedule. The larger the class, the less space available in the classroom and the heavier and more unwieldy the furniture, the more important it is for a teacher to think about classroom organisation.

Role of the Teacher

I would suggest that as teachers read this article they bear their class in mind and determine how some of the ideas given may be adopted or adapted. It might also be useful to consult with the Principal and other teachers before making some of these changes and to agree on a common plan for classroom organisation. After all, if more than one teacher in the school does this then life is likely to be much easier.

We must first of all consider the role of the teacher, for this will determine what kinds of classroom organisation he or she will choose

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to set up and when to do so. The teacher in traditional terms is usually seen to have four functions:

(1) **The Knower**—the person who has the information or knowlege;

(2) **The Instructor**—the person who then teaches that piece of information;

(3) **The Controller**—the person who disciplines and controls the pupils in class;

(4) **The Tester**—the person who tests the pupils to see how much they have learned.

In this system the important person is the teacher. However, there are two sides to education: teaching and learning.

We must ask ourselves the question: "Who is learning English—the teacher or the pupil?" If we answer 'the pupil' then all classroom activities must involve the pupils. The teacher can not do the learning for the pupil but can only help the pupil to learn. When we consider the purpose of the teacher in this way then his or her role becomes much wider. We must now add:

(5) **The Facilitator**—the person who helps and advises the pupils, who tries to foresee all the possible problems pupils may have and who makes it easy for the pupils to learn by careful lesson preparation and through activities designed to increase fluency in the language; the teacher must provide a method in which students are able to develop their control of language;

(6) **Classroom Manager**—many of the activities which are aimed at involving the pupils to increase student talking time demand a re-arrangement of the class; classroom management is important because if we consider the number of pupils in a class, the time taken by a teacher to explain a point and only six half hour periods per week, then we realise that the opportunities for a pupil to talk are extremely limited; moreover, in normal communication we are usually face to face with the people we are talking to and not sitting in rows, and the numbers we are talking to are few;

(7) **Consultant**—in many communicative activities the teacher does not directly interfere in the flow of talk between the pupils; however, he will be consulted on points of language or for further ideas by the pupils; if the pupil is unable to cope with the activity, the teacher will give advice and pro-

vide the necessary language; the teacher's presence is a psychological support; and

(8) **Monitor**—while the pupils are engaged in the various communicative activities the teacher is able to assess their language performance; the teacher is able to see where the pupils are generally weak and have problems, which grammar points are not fully understood or properly used and which skills (reading, writing, speaking) need to be emphasised; the monitoring process is very important for it helps the teacher to determine the learning needs of the pupils and what sort of remedial work should be done; whilst monitoring the flow of language the teacher should check that pupils do not use their vernacular language.

It is only by fulfilling all these roles that a teacher will help pupils to learn the English language in a truly communicative way. Teachers may complain that they do not have enough time to follow the syllabus and finish the grammar book as well as doing communicative exercises. If you are one of these teachers, then ask yourself, "Are my pupils able to cope with the present material? Are my pupils up to the right standard? Are my pupils able to communicate with others, both in the spoken and written form? Are all the pupils successful in other subjects where the medium of instruction is English? Are the majority of my pupils going on to pass their matriculation?" Most teachers see the purpose of teaching English as trying to get pupils through their matriculation. That is true but then that is not the end of the story. We must now ask and answer the next question, "What is the purpose of an examination?" The reason why pupils take an exam is to communicate their ideas to the examiner and to show the examiner what they have learned through the written medium—which is a communicative activity. If pupils are able to express themselves properly then the examination should pose no problem. On the other hand, if pupils rely on learning a number of 'language formulae' off by heart then they are obviously going to have problems in any exam.

Classroom Organisation

In the classroom, students quickly become sensitive to where the teacher stands and to how the teacher plans the seating arrangement of the class. If a teacher does decide to increase student talking time in the classroom then many activities require a re-

arrangement of the class. All the different kinds of communicative activities will require careful thought on the part of the teacher as to which is the most suitable form of classroom organisation. There are four basic ways in which a teacher may decide to arrange the class:

1. CLASSWORK
2. GROUP WORK
3. PAIR WORK
4. INDIVIDUAL WORK / SELF STUDY

The seating arrangement will tell students: (1) what type of activity they are going to do; (2) how they should interact with each other; (3) what your role is going to be (facilitator, instructor, monitor, etc.); and (4) whether you expect students to talk to you or not. In this article I will deal only with the problem of Classwork and Group work organisation.

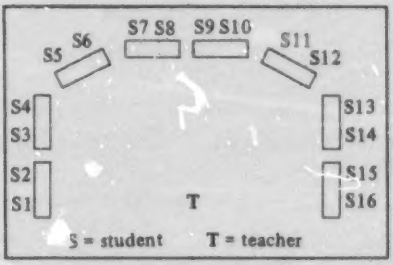
Teacher at the Front

Most teachers stand at the front of the classroom all the time. That is because they only see their role as the Instructor. A teacher should try to achieve some balance between standing at the front and moving around the classroom but this depends on what activity the teacher has planned. Activities that require the teacher to stand at the front of the classroom are: (1) giving instructions to the class; (2) presenting new language; (3) controlled practice, i.e. drills etc.; (4) work on the chalkboard; (5) setting up activities, i.e. dialogue building etc. Reasons for standing at the front are:

(1) you can see what everyone is doing or trying to say;
(2) you can maintain control through gesture and eye contact;
(3) you are mobile enough to help and correct individuals; and
(4) the students can focus on you; they need to see your facial expressions and gestures, as well as your mouth, since these all reinforce what is being said; (it's essential that students see your mouth if you are going to ask them to pronounce what you are saying; if you stand at the back of the class or even at the front with your back or side to the class you are depriving them of the best conditions for hearing and understanding).

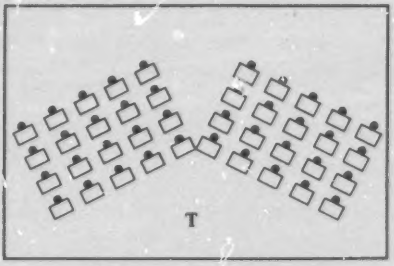
In a classroom, the more horseshoe-shaped the arrangement the better. In a classroom where there are between 16 – 25 pupils then the arrangement in Figure 1 is best.

Figure 1



However, many classrooms are too small for the number of pupils that there are and at times the furniture is difficult to move. In a class of 25 – 50 pupils, the teacher will need to have the furniture arranged in rows. It does help if the class can be divided and the two halves are slightly at an angle (see Figure 2). This arrangement will also benefit teachers of other subjects. If you spend a bit of time at the beginning of the year in getting your pupils to understand where they must sit and what they must do when you give a group work activity then you will save a lot of time during the year. Remember a period is only half an hour long and each minute is precious.

Figure 2



Group Work

In many of the activities designed to involve pupils to encourage fluency, the teacher will set up the situation and begin the activity but it is the students who must conduct the activity to its conclusion. These activities are based on student-to-student interaction

and often there will be a number of groups of students talking at the same time. The responsibility for the success of the group work lies with the pupils because the teacher must go from group to group and each group cannot be continuously supervised by the teacher. Group work has many advantages:

1. Group work increases student talking time and gives opportunities to the pupils to use language to communicate with each other. For example, groups working to produce a letter to be sent to the newspaper have a genuine need to communicate (an example of this is in the British Council film *Teaching Observed No. 7*).

2. Group work helps pupils to learn to work co-operatively. It is more dynamic, more people can interact at a time and there is a greater possibility of genuine discussion.

3. Group work allows pupils to teach and learn within the group. Pupils can learn from each other, good pupils may correct the language of poorer pupils in a natural way and the idea of failure may be removed.

4. Group work teaches pupils to be self-reliant and not teacher-dependent. This is not possible when the teacher is always there as the Controller/Discipliner.

5. Group work gives pupils a chance to work at their own pace and to concentrate on their weaknesses.

6. Group work gives the teacher time to go around the class and to correct individuals' work. It also allows the teacher to see where the pupils need remedial work and to determine their learning needs.

7. Group work allows the teacher to give activity work to pupils according to their abilities. A group where the pupils are weak will be given an easier task than that of a group where the pupils are good. Different groups can be formed so that not all the students are necessarily working on the same material at the same time.

Setting Up Groups

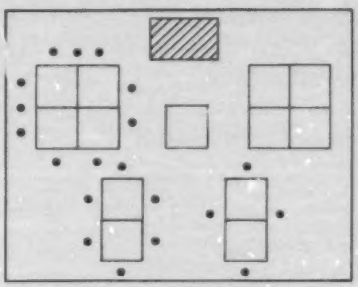
Some teachers and pupils are not familiar with group work and the idea of group work may even be a frightening one. For many pupils, the feeling that they are working in groups without the teacher's supervision may be unfamiliar. A too sudden change may create difficulties and many pupils would be left wondering what they should be doing. If this occurs, then pupils may lose confidence

in the teaching method. It is better for the teacher to gradually introduce the idea of group work to the class. This can be done by: (1) selecting activities which do not demand much from the pupils' own creative and linguistic abilities at first (later on the teacher can demand more from the pupils); (2) introducing activities which are short and easy to do; and (3) making sure that all instructions are very clear and that the pupils know exactly what is asked of them. At first the teacher must take great care in selecting the groups and getting them organised. It may be necessary to demonstrate the activity to the class.

Seating Arrangements

As we saw in a previous section, the seating arrangement of pupils is extremely important. The way you will arrange the desks and students for group work will depend on: (1) the purpose of the particular activity you wish to do; (2) the size of the classroom; (3) the number of pupils in the classroom; (4) the type of desks and chairs in the classroom; (5) the amount of time that you have for re-arrangement; and (6) how familiar the pupils are with group work activities. In an ideal situation there will not be more than 30 pupils, the students will have moveable chairs and desks and the room will have plenty of space. Desks can be put together to form groups of four or two. Four desks are suitable for groups of 4 - 12 and two desks together for groups of 4 - 6 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3



However, many teachers do not work in an ideal situation. The seating arrangements in Figures 4 and 5 are suitable for those teachers who have 40 - 60 pupils in a classroom and where the furniture is so heavy that they can not be moved. This is especially true of the large desk and bench bolted together to take 2 - 3 pupils.

Figure 4

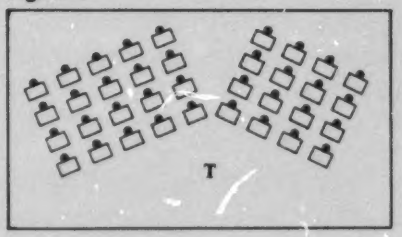
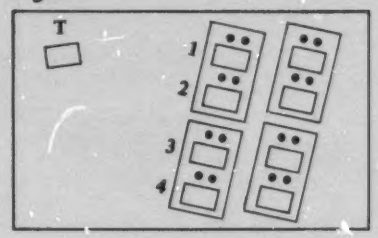


Figure 5

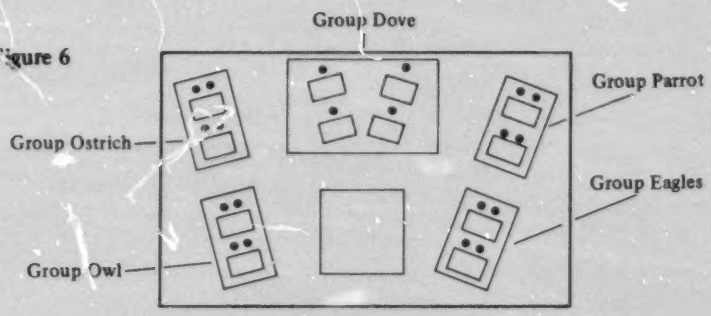


In Figure 5 the pupils do not need to move their desks to form groups. Pupils in rows 2 and 4 only have to turn around, sit on the desk tops and face pupils in rows 1 and 3. This is certainly not an ideal situation because the desk top is too narrow and the back bench does hinder the pupils in rows 2 and 4 in doing any serious writing activity. However, the pupils are facing each other and can take part in any oral fluency activity. In any case it will be up to the teacher to experiment with the seating arrangement of his or her class and to work out some sort of solution.

When Should You Organise Your Seating Arrangement?

Plan your seating arrangement at the beginning of the year when you have a new class or at the beginning of each term when you wish to change your pupils around. Spend ten minutes of your first lesson of the year arranging your class. Tell them that they must always occupy the same desks until you want them to change. Give pupils clear instructions. It helps to give a group a name to avoid confusion with another group. Tell the pupils that they must look at the other members of the group and where they are sitting and that this group will always be together (for example, see Figure 6).

Figure 6



Selection and Size of the Group

The teacher needs to think of the classroom seating arrangement in advance and must also ask and answer a number of questions about the formation of the groups in class: What size do I wish my groups to be? How do I wish to select my groups? Am I going to have pupils as group leaders? Should I decide on who sits next to whom?

What Size Do I Wish My Groups To Be?

The size of groups will depend on:

1. What classroom activities you wish to do. At the beginning of the year make a list of all the activities, for example, drills, dialogue practice, games, etc. Decide which activities need large groups and which activities can be done in small groups. For example, simple listening and repetition drills can be done with the whole class divided into three or four groups. Many learning games on the other hand can only be done in groups with a maximum of 4 - 6 persons. Later on, groups can be divided for pair work.

2. How many pupils you have in a class. The larger the numbers in a classroom the more difficult it will be to organise, to manage the activities, and to monitor the pupils. However, it is also true to say that the more pupils there are, the more need there is to do group work.

Class Size	*Pupils Per Group*
20-30	groups with 4 pupils
30-45	groups with 5 pupils
45-60+	groups with 6 pupils

How Do I Select My Groups?

Teachers may decide to select which pupils are to join what groups or they may decide to form groups according to where pupils sit in the classroom. If they choose to select the pupils then there are two possibilities: mixed ability groups and divided ability groups.

A mixed ability group is usually one which contains pupils who are representative of the learning ability range of the class. There are pupils who are slow learners, pupils who are of average ability, and pupils who are very good in the subject. The advantages of mixed ability groups are many:

1. Children are not labelled: no pupil feels superior or inferior.
2. There is an improved class atmosphere because of the first advantage.
3. Discipline problems are fewer since there are no areas where problem students can get together.
4. Pupils learn to work co-operatively.
5. There are more opportunities for teacher-pupil contacts.
6. There are more and more meaningful pupil-pupil contacts.
7. Late developers are given improved chances.
8. Pupils may, more readily, work at their own level.
9. A levelling up of attainment occurs (slower pupils improve their performance).
10. There is improved language development.
11. Brighter pupils can help less able ones.
12. There is more time given to individual pupils.
13. There is more time available before pupils' abilities need to be assessed.
14. All pupils appear more confident.
15. There is less stress or emotional tension than in a streamed situation.

There are also problems of mixed ability teaching:

1. Appropriate teaching materials are sometimes difficult to think of.
2. It is hard to teach a whole-class lesson at the correct level.
3. It is difficult to keep track of all pupils' progress.
4. Teachers need to be committed to the idea of mixed ability teaching.
5. Teachers need to spend a of time in preparation and resource-making.
6. Bright pupils may waste a lot of time.
7. Teachers spend time disproportionately on the slow learners.
8. Slow learners may feel they always fail.

Pupils who are either very good or very weak have the most need of attention in a mixed ability group. Pupils of low ability often do better than expected in a mixed ability group. They are able to take part in work which would be too difficult for them to do alone and their self-confidence increases. However, a teacher must not make too great a demand, otherwise, the pupil will lose confidence. Pupils who are very good at their subject may also have problems. The material and work asked may be too easy and they

may not be stretched enough to do their best. These pupils become bored and frustrated when time is taken up by work which is obvious to them, or as they wait their turn for the teacher.

It is important for the teacher to consider and plan work for the slow and bright pupils in the class. Here is some basic advice on handling slow learners in mixed ability classes:

1. Avoid dead time which may result if they finish their work quickly even though it is not very well done. Have something else planned.

2. Give a number of different tasks, none being very long. Concentration span is short and tasks should be clear, to the point, and brief.

3. Tell them what to do as well as giving them written instructions. Slow learners may also be slow and incomplete readers.

4. Go over key points frequently as they have short memories.

5. Keep interest and motivation by arousing their curiosity, giving praise, and occasionally using competition.

6. Encourage them to join in the class even though their answers or contributions are poor compared with others.

7. Give individual attention when you can, either during the lesson or out of lesson hours. Keep an interest in them as people, the things they like and are good at.

8. Be consistent in your discipline, even-tempered but firm. Encourage success.

On the other hand, a teacher may decide to stream the pupils so that all the good pupils are together, the intermediate ability groups are ranged in other groups and the poor pupils of low ability are concentrated in a separate group. The teacher can only decide which pupils to place in the respective groups after comprehensive information has been collected about those pupils. A divided ability group allows the teacher to set different work to the various groups, according to each group's ability, at the same time. In this way bright pupils can be set challenging and demanding work without being held up by the rest of the class whilst the teacher is able to concentrate on remedial language work with pupils who are struggling with English.

For divided ability group work activities the teacher must know the general and language needs of bright and slow pupils. Bright pupils need: (1) opportunities for competition; (2) to learn co-operation; (3) the stimulus of work at the higher learning levels;

(4) to develop skills of problem solving and problem devising; (5) security to ask difficult questions of the teacher; (6) independence in learning; (7) their ideas and suggestions valued; (8) encouragement to speculate; (9) experience of failure; (10) to become self-critical; (11) the ability to accept criticism; (12) social skills (tolerance, humour); (13) friendship amongst other bright pupils; and (14) to broaden their interests beyond those of their specific skills. The language needs of the pupils can only be determined by the teacher in class.

Am I Going To Have Pupils As Group Leaders?

The advantages of a group leader are: (1) the leader can act as chairman in a discussion or group activity; (2) the leader can act as spokesman for the group and tell the rest of the class the decision of the group; this can save time and help the group to clarify their opinions; (3) the leader can help to keep the group's concentration on the task because he or she knows that it is the leader's job to report back; and (4) the leader can help the shyer and less bright pupils as his or her language would be better. If you do decide to choose a group leader you must try to see the reaction of other pupils to the leader. The leader may be a bright pupil but this may cause problems within the group. You should also monitor the effectiveness of the pupil's leadership. The leader must know how to encourage and help the others and must not try and do all the work. Finally, try to determine the benefit and/or problems the experience of being the group leader brings to the pupil.

The group leaders are important to successful learning. What they have to do should therefore be explained to them right at the beginning. It is recommended that the teacher demonstrates the role by acting as leader with the group for the benefit of the whole class. The following roles should be shown:

1. After individuals have attempted to solve problems on their own, the group leader asks for answers and writes them down, noting areas of agreement and disagreement.

2. The leader then deals with areas of agreement asking group members in turn to give their answers. This is to check that they have actually found a satisfactory solution and that it has been reached by appropriate and logical means. Here the leader should make sure that the members pick up any evidence that they have missed which either supports or contradicts the answer. The solu-

tion is then confirmed or modified and the leader notes down the agreed answer.

3. The leader then deals with points which have caused disagreement, again asking members for their evidence. At any point in the discussion there can be argument as members try to justify their answers and persuade others that they are wrong. At some point, unless alternative solutions are possible, some students may be obliged to change their opinions in the light of evidence that they previously missed or misinterpreted. The leader notes down the agreed group answer and any minority opinion that exists.

4. The group leader may subsequently be called upon to explain group decisions and rationalizations to the class.

5. The group leader must make sure that every member has a chance to make a contribution and that no single person, including himself, dominates the group.

6. In all group activity, the group leader is responsible for making sure that the correct procedures are followed.

Classroom Procedure For Group Work

The most important point in classroom procedure is that **all instructions must be given slowly and clearly and that pupils must know what to do and what is expected of them**. (If pupils are unsure of their role, do not know the reason for group work activity, do not know where to sit or what they must do, then they will lose confidence in the teacher, lose confidence in the work, lose confidence in group work teaching, and lose confidence in their own abilities.)

Time must be spent at the beginning of the year arranging classroom seating and making sure that pupils know which group they belong to.

Time must also be spent at the beginning of the year explaining to pupils the advantages of group work.

Time must be spent with group leaders so that they are sure of their own roles and can guide other pupils in their groups.

Time must be spent at the beginning of each new type of activity to explain to the pupils the purpose of the activity and what they must do. A teacher needs only four or five types of exercises, (for example, information gap exercises, question and answer drills, dialogue work, and games) throughout the year which can be used to allow the pupils to practise the structure being taught.

The teaching aim of a group is often to encourage fluent, uninterrupted communication, even when the aim for the students might be to produce something like a dialogue or a story. Therefore, you should stand back once you have set up the activity and allow a short time for the pupils to get on with it. This will give you a chance to see which groups seem to be working satisfactorily and which are having problems. It also gives the pupils a chance to begin the activity before you offer help to any one group. Don't be too concerned if a group does not seem to be too sure of itself at first; some groups take time to get going. You should also quickly check what they are doing. This reminds them that you are there and allows you to check that they are doing what you intended.

Don't interrupt, unless the group has misunderstood what it is supposed to be doing (and you can put it right), or unless you are participating as part of a group, not as the teacher on high. Of course, if some of the groups seem to be on the verge of finishing then either give them something else to do or stop the whole activity. You may also interrupt if the group you are with seems to be a long way behind (and you can get it going), or if you are asked to do so by the group. They may properly need some advice, but do not let them get too dependent on you.

You should spread your attention. If you concentrate on one particular group, they will feel nervous by your continuing presence and you will not get a very clear idea of how well the rest of the class is doing; the rest of the class, apart from being neglected, may well start drifting away from the activity without you realizing. Don't correct, unless the aim of the activity is controlled language practice and it is breaking down, or unless a student asks you to. Occasionally, students will want you to help them say something correctly but don't hover so close to any one group that they get self-conscious and frightened of making mistakes. If you do have to get involved, do it discreetly, by crouching at the level of the group and allowing individuals to turn away from the rest of the group and talk to you. If the students need a lot of help and correction then the chances are that the task is inappropriate and/or beyond their capabilities. Sometimes, you might decide to only correct a certain kind of error.

Try to be easily accessible. All the groups should feel they have equal access to you and are being supervised equally. You may need to feed in ideas. It is often better to suggest to one member of

the group a possible change of direction, rather than interrupt the flow of the whole group. Encourage them, if necessary. At the beginning, groups often need encouragement to get them going –sometimes a group may start to lose interest. Always be positive. Always suggest that the activity can be very useful. Finally, take notes. Although in group work you are often concerned to show students that you are more interested in what they are doing than in evaluating their language performance, specific problems do arise. Things may not be communicated adequately or there may be consistent and significant grammatical errors that should be noted. If there is a problem common to most of the group, then this might be the focus of a future lesson. The key to successful group work is careful planning and preparation of teaching materials and learning activities.

FOR FURTHER READING:

Teaching Practice Handbook: R. Gower & S. Walters.
(Heinemann Educational Books)

Class Management and Control: E.C. Wragg.
(DES Teacher Education Project. Macmillan Books)

Handling Classroom Groups: T. Kerry & M. Sands.
(DES Project. Macmillan Books)

The Practice of English Language Teaching: J. Harmer.
(Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers)

(Much of the material used in the programme was derived from the first two books which proved invaluable.)

Cross Currents
Vol. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Using an Unrehearsed Tape for Student-Directed Language Learning

Patrick Blanche

In 1983, I first used an unrehearsed audiotape to help Japanese businessmen practice telephone conversations in English. Since then, I have developed a technique for working with unrehearsed tapes which enables students to improve their listening strategies within a learning situation that makes listening comprehension tightly dependent on other language skills. Ideally the lesson should evolve into a group communication activity in which all the participants talk to each other with the concrete, common purpose of understanding something they have just heard. By getting important pieces of linguistic information from each other, they will also better understand that communication of information is the key to listening comprehension. The knowledge so gained should build up each person's confidence and ultimately increase his or her communicative competence.

An unrehearsed tape is an impromptu dialogue recorded on tape by native speakers. This dialogue is not read from a script, nor is it memorized or rehearsed in any way. Yet it requires a certain amount of advance planning since following pedagogical guidelines is a prerequisite for any type of purposeful classroom activity. An unrehearsed tape usually revolves around a main idea or theme, such as a business trip to the United States. It is designed to show how certain language functions are performed and how some of the notions which accompany these functions can be conveyed in English (depending on the linguistic ability of the students). The

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recorded dialogue must remain consistent with specific teaching goals but still must sound like a spontaneous conversation.

Unrehearsed tapes are multipurpose teaching tools. They can be used either to promote the students' general understanding of a conversation carried on at normal speed (see Sasaki 1980), or to help the students to focus their attention on discrete parts of speech without sacrificing the authenticity of the language they hear. However, unrehearsed tapes need not be restricted to the teaching of listening comprehension. They can lead up to both imitative and creative role-play sequels that will give everyone many opportunities to speak. One could also design and record unrehearsed telephone conversations to train ESL students in the use of the telephone.

But in spite of their many tried and true advantages, these tapes have inherent limitations. When they are used primarily to teach listening, they are liable to remind some students of negative language laboratory experiences—hearing unspeakable words modeled by unmatchable voices, for example, and thinking that they have failed to reach required standards. And when they set the stage for speaking practice, unrehearsed tapes can easily lure students into memorizing entire talks.

In sum, unrehearsed tapes offer no guarantee that the notions and functions which they are meant to embody will be internalized by a majority of students in a linguistically productive fashion, even though unrehearsed conversations recorded on tape for inductive teaching purposes may well represent a major improvement over the contrived dialogues that often serve as background to audio-lingual pattern drills. Consequently, I have developed a technique which encourages students to work together to process information from an unrehearsed tape.

In the following section, I shall give a detailed account of how I used an unrehearsed tape with very encouraging results. This type of integrated classroom activity was well received in Japan by businessmen, university students, and teachers of English.

Procedures

This activity requires a blank cassette tape, an unrehearsed tape, two tape recorders with pause buttons, and a sensitive external microphone to get good quality recordings on the blank tape. The unrehearsed conversation should last from thirty seconds to two and a half minutes, depending on the class level.

Prelistening (10 to 15 minutes)

Students should be given background information about what they are going to hear on the unrehearsed tape. This can be accomplished in many ways but should be kept within the overall curriculum guidelines. For instance, a prelistening oral summarization exercise would fit in well with an approach emphasizing general understanding and actual communication of information.

However, I have been working with a curriculum that focuses on error correction and detailed linguistic analysis. The following is an example of a written summary that I used to present background information. The summary is cut into strips and the students are asked to piece together the information in the correct order. The summary is taken from *The Yamashita Story*.[1]

> Charles Blake is an American who works for a Japanese company, Yamashita Ltd. Yamashita Ltd. manufactures industrial robots and would like to sell its robots overseas. The company has decided to try to enter the American market. Until now Yamashita has only sold its robots domestically. Charles Blake travels to San Francisco to meet with representatives of Advanced Technologies, a manufacturer of electronic components for computers. He meets with Mike Epstein (Production Engineer) and Shirley Graham (Vice-President), who are impressed with the quality and price of the robots. However, the fact that Yamashita has no maintenance staff nor any place to store spare parts in the U.S. is a major obstacle to the sale. Shirley Graham is hesitant to allow spare parts to be stored in Advanced Technologies' warehouse. Another problem is that Advanced Technologies has never done business with a Japanese company.

The students work in small groups. Each group must reconstruct the summary by piecing together several strips of paper on which only five to fifteen words are shown. In order to make this preliminary task easier (and to save valuable classroom time), a very short outline can be written on the chalkboard while the students are working. In the case of *The Yamashita Story*, the following two sentences would provide the class with substantial guiding information:

> The American representative of a Japanese company that manufactures robots meets the representatives of an American company

[1] *The Yamashita Story* is an unrehearsed thematic tape that has been developed at the Language Institute of Japan. It is being prepared for publication.

that might agree to buy many of these robots. There are reasons for getting the robots, and reasons for not getting them.

The job is complete when the teacher has made sure that everyone thoroughly understands the summary.

First Listening (2 to 5 minutes)

The unrehearsed tape is played once without interruption. Two student leaders have been designated by the teacher to sit facing each other next to the tape recorder. One student has been given a transcript of the first speaker's part (A's page); the other student has the transcript of the second speaker's part (B's page). Certain functional phrases have been clozed out and both students should fill ... the blanks in their respective transcripts as they are listening to the tape. This will impel them to concentrate as much as their classmates, who have no written material to fall back on. The teacher ought to make sure that all the students know exactly what they are supposed to do before playing the tape: at this stage, the rest of the class should just listen.

The following is the transcript of an episode from *The Yamashita Story*. The class should be given the notes contained in the section entitled "Situation." The underlined words in the transcript are the functional phrases that have been clozed out.

Situation : Charles Blake of Yamashita Ltd. makes an appointment over the telephone with Mike Epstein of Advanced Technologies.

	A's Page		B's Page
Receptionist:	Advanced Technologies. May I help you?	Receptionist:	Advanced Technologies. May I help you?
C. Blake:	Yes, this is Charles Blake of Yamashita Limited. I'd like to speak with Mike Epstein, please.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
Receptionist:	Just a minute and I'll put you through.	Receptionist:	Just a minute and I'll put you through.
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Hello, Mr. Blake.

C. Blake:	Hello, Mr. Epstein, how are you?	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	I'm fine thanks. How are you?
C. Blake:	Great.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Uh, when did you get in to San Francisco?
C. Blake:	Well, I just arrived at my hotel a few moments ago.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Oh, uh, well, when should we, eh, get together?
C. Blake:	I was wondering if we could possibly arrange a meeting for tomorrow sometime.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Yes, that's fine. I'll be free after eleven o'clock. How's that?
C. Blake:	Ah, that sounds fine with me.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Okay, uh, well, where are you staying?
C. Blake:	Well, I'm staying at the Hilton Hotel.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	All right, that's very close to here. I'll tell you what, I'll meet you around eleven fifteen and then we can go out for lunch, and then I'll show you around the city.
C. Blake:	Okay, that would be very nice.	C. Blake:	(Listen)

M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Okay, one more thing. Uh, one of our, I'd like to introduce you to one of our vice-presidents, uh, Ms. Shirley Graham. She's in charge of the project that I'm working on. Uh, I was wondering if we could get together, uh, say on Wednesday.
C. Blake:	Ah-h, I have no plans on Wednesday, and I would like to meet her.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Okay then, if you could keep your schedule free, uh, around lunchtime on Wednesday, then I'll finalize the appointment with her.
C. Blake:	Okay, very good.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Okay, very good. I'll be looking forward to seeing you tomorrow morning.
C. Blake:	Tomorrow at 11:15 at my hotel.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Yes, okay.
C. Blake:	I'm looking forward to seeing you, too.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Okay, see you then.
C. Blake:	Good-bye.	C. Blake:	(Listen)
M. Epstein:	(Listen)	M. Epstein:	Bye-bye.

Discussion In Pairs (3 to 5 minutes)

The student leaders look over each other's parts and verify that the gaps have been filled in correctly. The teacher gives them help and further instructions if necessary. The other students start discussing the general meaning of the dialogue in pairs. The students in each pair then agree to concentrate on different parts of the dialogue during the rest of the activity. Thus if one person chooses Part A, his or her partner takes Part B. If there is any confusion at this point the tape can be played once again.

Speaking Practice and Listening Practice With Note-Taking (2 to 6 minutes)

The student leaders begin practicing the conversation. Although they are reading from their scripts, they must try to maintain eye contact while speaking. While the student leaders are doing this, the other students start taking notes with a view to reconstructing either Part A or Part B from what they hear the student leaders say.

Reproducing the spoken conversation verbatim is not precisely the objective of this step, although it is likely that the students will all try to do this in the beginning. In fact, their attempts to do so may help to achieve an important goal of this step, which is for the students to come to the sobering conclusion that transcribing an English conversation accurately at the same time as it is spoken may well be beyond their ability. But then they will find other, slower ways to get essentially the same results. Discussion with peers who have heard the same conversation and comparison of written information are two alternate strategies available to them.

The better the students' listening ability, the more closely they will tend to approximate the original dialogue. When the group's listening skills are not so good, they will still reproduce sizeable parts of the conversation verbatim and the rest of it in their own words.

Classroom Tape-Recording and Note-Taking (6 to 10 minutes)

Still using their transcripts, the two student leaders record the dialogue they have just rehearsed. The other students continue to take notes. In these note-taking steps, the teacher has time to move about the classroom, notice close approximations, and show his or

her approval. Next, the scripts are taken away from the student leaders. They continue to work together and write down as much as they can remember from their respective parts. Meanwhile those students who chose to concentrate on Part A get together in small groups and those who chose Part B form groups of similar size. The students in each group compare their notes.

Synchronized Playback and Further Note-Taking (3 to 8 minutes)

The tape recorders have been placed next to each other to play back both the dialogue recorded in the classroom and the unrehearsed tape. First, the teacher plays the first line of the students' dialogue. Then s/he plays the first line of the original unrehearsed tape. Next, s/he plays the second line of the students' dialogue and continues this process until the students have heard both dialogues completely.

All the students are now taking notes. As they are doing that, they can keep comparing the students' speech with English spoken by native speakers. But because such a comparison is not the explicit purpose of the activity, hardly anyone is likely to feel threatened by it. Moreover, the fact that the student leaders' speech is often slower than that of native speakers tends to be perceived as an advantage whenever it enables other students to identify words which they might have missed otherwise. Of course, the student leaders should be able to recognize every word they said, which further qualifies them for helping the other students later.

This step may require some practice on the teacher's part. It may also be repeated in the classroom if s/he feels that a second synchronized playback would truly benefit the students. The whole exercise could be stopped at this juncture and continued at another time.

Peer Counseling Phase (4 to 7 minutes)

The student leaders have been instructed to help the other students. They act as facilitators or advisers. The first student leader advises the A groups while the second student leader advises the B groups. In this step, the student leaders are instructed to give their peers the correct idioms whenever correction is needed for words and expressions that were used in the original dialogue, and not to reject alternate language forms where these are legitimate. This will make the student leaders report back to the teacher

periodically with questions such as "Does *Is that okay?* have the same meaning as *How's that?*" As a result, the students being counseled will end up teaching their peer counselors nearly as much as they will learn from them, and everyone should realize that communication is a creative effort moderated by tolerance and understanding, which precludes inflexibility: there must be freedom to create as well as willingness to understand.

Pair Practice and Role Plays (15 to 20 minutes)

All the students have been put into pairs. They now begin rehearsing the dialogue. If the curriculum has been designed to stress general understanding and communication of information, the students should not use their notes while rehearsing or doing the role play. However, if the curriculum emphasizes error correction and a close analysis of linguistic structures, the students should be allowed to use their notes during this step. When they have had sufficient time to prepare, the students act out the dialogue in front of their classmates.

Follow-Up Procedures

The students' acting out of the reconstructed conversation could be recorded. This would provide the teacher with a complete practice tape. The students would be able to use it later for self-monitoring purposes. They could also write up alternate scenarios which take place under similar circumstances and try to act them out with or without notes. For instance, they might be able to formulate what the speakers would have said if their sex and/or socio-economic status had been different, provided the teacher gives them the requisite cultural information.

If this activity is repeated several times during an ESL course, a good many of the students will have a chance to become leaders and to counsel their peers.

Conclusion

I used the dialogue from *The Yamashita Story* with groups of lower intermediate, intermediate, and upper intermediate students. The lower intermediate students were able to reproduce better than 80% of the original spoken information completely, in the right order, and often in their own words, in a little more than an hour. Upper intermediate students could reproduce up to 95% of the same linguistic information in forty minutes.

This integrated activity, which was especially planned for the ESL classroom, has hardly anything in common with a language laboratory exercise. It incorporates listening, speaking, and writing tasks. It encourages constant interaction among classmates, and although it is highly structured, it allows teachers to maintain an exceptionally low profile. The students' time-on-task ratio remains consistently high. Teachers speak less than 15% of the time, do little explaining, no modeling, and correct very few errors. They help the student leaders at the beginning only to make it easier for them to counsel their peers later on. Then they are more or less free to observe all the participants. Thus they are in the best position to identify the difficulties that students are having and to form an idea of their individual learning styles. Yet the teachers' *presence* is crucial: they must give precise directions and always make sure that the students understand them; they must produce good quality recordings and play them back smoothly; they must monitor the students' pair work, coordinate role-play activities and, of course, make a few suggestions and answer some questions. They must be in full command of each successive situation. But in spite of that they might feel somewhat "unwanted" every time the students are working in small groups, which is going to be at least 60% of the time. In terms of modern language teaching methodology, the degree to which teachers feel "unwanted" is a measure of their success in fostering confidence and independence in their students.

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Cross Currents
Vol. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Your Breads, Wines, and Cheeses: A Look at English Countability

Donna J. Brigman

One of the activities which learners (including language learners) engage in is categorization. Languages show reality cut up into various categories; however, what is a category in one language is not necessarily a category in another language. Patterns of categorization may be a manifestation of some internal network which enables individuals to speak native languages fluently (Stern 1973:17). Yet this network which keeps people from making mistakes in their native language may hinder them from gaining an intuitive grasp of certain aspects of a non-native language.

> The second language learner instinctively uses his existing mother-tongue network as a frame of reference for his new language experiences, although this is patently wrong and out of place. He behaves like someone entering a room with distorting mirrors of false perspectives. He uses his existing frame of reference, in spite of the fact that it blocks him and cannot help him in perception. In learning a second language we have to build up a totally fresh frame of reference or network. (Stern 1973:24)

The internal network which unites speakers of the same language and separates speakers of different languages, works so quietly that native speakers hardly notice just how they categorize certain items within their own language. Language learners, on the other hand, have quite a job trying to guess their way through a new and seemingly illogical system of categorization. What could be more

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illogical than the classification of money, something that is counted daily, as a noncount noun? Yet few native English speakers question this point. French assigns male gender to gardens, but in reality gardens have no characteristics which classify them as either male or female. Languages often contain categories which, although used with no conscious effort by native speakers, do not represent categories in the real world. Therefore ESL/EFL students cannot be expected to share the same view of reality, much less the view of reality that a teacher has constructed in accord with English.

In this paper I will examine English countability which is a complex linguistic distinction. I will then offer a system of compromise between the partial and misleading analysis frequently presented to students and an analysis which is too complete and overwhelming. The system I propose directs students to examine contexts rather than individual words for the status of countability. This system offers students a tool which will help them to categorize things in the same way as a native speaker. Perhaps students will find some relief from the double bind of resisting their mother-tongue network on the one hand while relying on false or overly complex rules on the other.

Count/Noncount: Don't Count On It

The relationship between one and more than one is not as straightforward as it might first appear. John Lyons (1968:282) compares the countable English noun *grape* with the German *Traube** and the Russian *vinograd* which are both classified as noncount. The French *raisin* may be used in the singular, either as a noncount noun (*Vous voulez du raisin?*) or as a collective noun (*Prenez un raisin*), which is normally translated not as *have a grape*, but *have some grapes*. Furthermore, some languages not only distinguish between singular and plural, but make other distinctions as well. Ancient Sanskrit, Greek, and Arabic use a grammatical category to refer to pairs of objects. An Ethopian language makes a distinction between small and large, as well as that of singular and plural. Still other languages use the singular noun with numerals larger than one, even though the language has the singular/plural distinction. In Welsh for example, *four dogs* is *pedwar ci* even though *dog* is *ci* and *dogs* is *cwn*. Individuation is the crucial point here rather than plurality (Palmer 1977:124).

* Lyons is mistaken in his use of the German word *Traube*, which is classified as a countable noun. He probably means *Wein*. "—Ed."

In the same way, the countability distinction in English is not a straightforward system of count and noncount (sometimes called count and mass). A typical textbook explanation distinguishes between count nouns (words for objects that can be counted) and noncount nouns (words for objects that cannot be counted). This count/noncount distinction is often based on lists of words which are used with *much* and *many*, and omits valuable information which could leave students with an oversimplified notion of countability. The following example, no doubt intended to reduce the language to a more palatable form, leaves a large and well-used area of English unaccounted for.

Count	Noncount
How many eyes do you have?	How much cash do you have with you?
How many thumbs do you have?	How much change do you have?
How many feet do you have?	How much money do you have?

Although linguistic analysis of countability (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik 1972) is reasonable, the count/noncount system traditionally offered students is simplified to the point where the distinctions are no longer true. This misrepresentation will either be unfamiliar to students who have already noticed the broader patterns of countability, or will mislead students into thinking that English countability is narrow and inflexible. Hall's comments in this vein are particularly appropriate:

> Much of the difficulty in our schools today stems from the fact the teachers try to inculcate and teach patterns that are partially or incorrectly analyzed. In many instances the technical descriptions simply do not fit the facts. Instead of having a familiar ring to the child there is a decidedly unfamiliar ring. In fact, much of what he hears goes against everything he has learned outside the classroom. A good deal of the content taught under the rubric of "grammar" falls in this category. (1973:130)

The fault does not lie with linguists, nor in the fact that through linguistic analysis incongruities in the count/noncount system arise. The crux of the problem is that a given student can produce or encounter items which deviate from this system, and which are grammatically correct. Deviations from the count/noncount system are not rare. In fact, one does not have to walk far down any city street in an English-speaking country before noticing signboards

containing such words as "salads," "liquors," "fruits," "fabrics," "perfumes," and so on, all designated as noncount nouns in most ESL textbooks. A student who has learned that "bread" is a noncount noun would find the phrase, "the breads of Europe" strange, whereas a native speaker is perfectly capable of saying or hearing just such an utterance with no undue reaction. In fact, native speakers have quite a high tolerance for the shifting of nouns into different categories of countability. Moreover, this shifting is not merely tolerated, but regarded as information crucial to understanding.

The count/noncount system traditionally offered students may seem a logical one to native speakers or language teachers, but it is only a convenient starting place in the analysis of countability. ESL textbooks usually do not go beyond this simplified system. Given such limited guidelines, teachers may issue such nebulous mandates as, "Your breads, wines, and cheeses are always noncount!" (This rule was actually given to an ESL class in New York City, 1981.) Some teachers may present a more truthful analysis of the problem by including nouns with limited generic reference as in "the breads of Europe." However, the traditional scheme is still incomplete in that it ignores words which freely move from one category of countability to another with explicit or subtle changes in meaning. Some examples are shown below:

have pleasant experiences	have a great deal of experience
hear an irritating sound	travel faster than sound
have confidential talks	have idle talk

(Quirk et al. 1972:128–129)

Quirk and his co-authors have found a relationship between concrete nouns and count nouns, and between abstract nouns and noncount nouns. According to Quirk et al., outside of this tendency, there is no logical reason for certain nouns to be assigned to the count or noncount class (130).

With this type of shifting in mind, here are some examples of nouns in context which contradict the rules normally given for countability:

1. "But differences in the *knowledges* of such rules must be studied to isolate the areas of conflict which proceed from ignorance on both sides. . . ." (Labov 1978:56).
2. "The point I tried to make in that book and that I've tried to develop further is the central importance of *discourses*: develop-

ing in the classroom meaningful, purposeful activities which will lead the learners to an awareness of how the language is used. . . ." (Widdowson 1983).

3. "It's *a jean* that fits right." (advertisement circa 1982)
4. "So if you want to see a variety of *art works*, come down to Washington Square this afternoon." (radio broadcast)
5. "We clean antique *fabrics*."
6. Claude: "What in heaven's name brought you to Casablanca?"
   Rick: "My health. I came for the *waters*."
   Claude: "*Waters*? What *waters*? We're in the desert."
   Rick: "I was misinformed." (*Casablanca* 1942)
7. Mr. Mc Guire: "I just want to say one word to you. Just one word."
   Ben: "Yes, sir."
   Mr. Mc Guire: "Are you listening?"
   Ben: "Yes, I am."
   Mr. Mc Guire: "*Plastics*."
   Ben: "Exactly how do you mean?"
   Mr. Mc Guire: "There's a great future in *plastics*. Think about it. Will you think about it?"
   Ben: "Yes, sir. I will."
   Mr. Mc Guire: "Enough said." (*The Graduate* 1967)

For language learners who have been taught that words like "knowledge," "discourse," "jeans," "art work," "fabric," "water," and "plastic" are invariably either count or noncount, the above instances of them would be quite surprising. Such students must surely think some sort of error has occurred. With this discrepancy between rules and reality, students will certainly miss nuances intended by authors and speakers.

Linguistic analysis has uncovered a large number of counterexamples to the count/noncount distinction (Quirk et al. 1972:128-129). Although it is true that some nouns fall into one category or another with regularity, they can shift into other categories. The above examples help illustrate that nouns actually inherit their distinction of countability from the linguistic environment they are in at a particular moment. If students are directed to look at these environments rather than label nouns as either count or noncount, they may see a more comprehensive picture of the way countability functions in English.

When a noun changes environments its countability status may also change. It is possible to chart the movement of nouns through

linguistic environments. The five sentences which follow show the noun *fabric* in five different environments. In each case, *fabric* has received its distinction of countability from the linguistic environment which it is in at a particular time:

1. I need to choose a *fabric* which will match my carpet.
2. These three *fabrics* go nicely together.
3. I don't have enough *fabric* to make a full skirt.
4. Here is a *fabric* which washes well.
5. We clean antique *fabrics*.

The five potential environments through which nouns shift can be classified as in Table 1.

Table 1

Example	Description of Environment
I need to choose a fabric which will match my carpet.	In this environment, a noun is a single item[1] which will be counted.
These three fabrics go nicely together.	In this environment, a noun represents more than one discrete item which will be counted.
I don't have enough fabric to make a full skirt.	In this environment, a noun represents an undifferentiated mass with no discrete items, and will not be counted.
Here is a fabric which washes well.	In this environment, a noun represents a kind, or type of single item in a categorical or proverbial sense.
We clean antique fabrics.	In this environment, a noun represents some kinds, or types of items which form a category or several categories.

[1] "Item" in this sense is equivalent to "thing, entity, concept."

People do use nouns in ways which defy the count/noncount distinction. It is my contention that students who are taught half-truths about language will make faulty hypotheses about the correctness of what they say and hear. The solution to this is to teach a more complete system so that students may build up a fresh frame of reference or internal network which will match the language as it is spoken by native speakers.

A Sluice Box for Countability

A complete linguistic description of countability as it exists in the language may prove to be an unwieldy tool for students. Yet there is a system which will strike a compromise between the count/noncount system, and a complete linguistic analysis. This system explicitly illustrates changes in countability status by showing nouns filtering through a box which in some ways resembles a sluice box. A sluice box is a tool used by miners and geologists, in which dirt is separated from chunks of ore which flow through a series of grates. The chunks stop when they are too large for the next grate. A sluice box for countability could be a device of lines and boxes drawn on a page. In this case the chunks of ore are nouns which change their meaning as they pass through the grates and enter new troughs, that is, new environments. This sluice box demonstrates that certain nouns have the potential to occur in different environments and that in these environments their countability status may change. If students examine the environments through which nouns flow, the parameters of this shifting may become more apparent, and they may gain a better understanding of countability.

The following sluice boxes show a few nouns moving through the five troughs or environments. Even though some of the troughs are empty in certain cases, there is always a possibility that they can be filled. For example, just as linguists are aware of "Englishes" (trough five), hematologists must certainly work with "bloods" (trough five). That is, nouns can be referred to in specialized ways requiring more specific distinctions in terms of categorization. All positions exist whether they are filled or not. This is akin to Allen's concept of the unfilled position in Sector Analysis. Regarding this issue Allen writes, ". . . the recognition of unfilled positions is crucial to any thorough grammatical analysis" (1972:163).

I need to choose a fabric which will match my carpet. trough one
These three fabrics go nicely together. trough two
I don't have enough fabric to make a full skirt. trough three
Here is a fabric which washes well. trough four
We clean antique fabrics. trough five

There is a hair in my soup.
There are two hairs in my soup.
She washes her hair everyday.
The wigs were made of a hair well suited for color treatment.
The hairs were separated into piles of length and color.

I have a comb, a wallet, and a lipstick in my bag.
She sold at least 20 lipsticks every day.
You have lipstick on your collar.
She wore a lovely pink lipstick.
The lipsticks of Japan are made of natural oils.

A fish swam by.
Three fish (fishes) swam by.
How much fish can you eat at one sitting?
I was shocked to see them eating such a rare fish.
The fish (fishes) of the Red and China Seas have a distinct odor.

There is a salad in the refrigerator.
There are two salads in the refrigerator.
I love salad.
I love a good shrimp salad.
The salads of Hawaii and Japan differ immensely.

I'll take a coffee to go.
Give me two coffees.
Coffee is not good for you.
I have never tasted a coffee so strong.
The coffees of Colombia are noted for their richness.

I had one major difficulty in writing this paper.
Sue had quite a few difficulties getting a job.
Did you have much difficulty finding a restroom?
It was a difficulty beyond belief.
The difficulties between the two nations were resolved.

They dyed the little chicken pink for Easter.
The other chickens would not let it into the barnyard.
Are we having chicken for dinner again?
The Rhode Island Red is a chicken that lays well.
The chickens of Virginia and Tennessee tend to be lean.

There is an apple on the table.
There are 20 apples in the basket.
The pancakes smell of apple.
The Washington is an apple particularly suited for pies.
The apples of China and Russia are not being exported any more.

Will mankind survive the nuclear age?

My sister grows tobacco.
One tobacco is as good as the next.
He is an expert on fine tobaccos.

He always carried his radio when he rode the subway.
He never carried two radios.
He loved radio more than television.
The Japanese make a fine radio.
The radios of Korea and Japan are equally good.

An army came from the west to help restore order.
The two armies fought relentlessly.
Theirs was not an army which could fight in the desert.
The armies of ancient Greece and Rome were extremely powerful.

A few observations students and I have made when using this sluice box are:

1. If a noun falls into the first trough it can readily fall into the second trough.

2. Although a certain noun may fall into any trough, when it shifts into a different trough, it experiences either a subtle or explicit change in meaning.
3. Although there is a potential for nouns to fall into any trough, some instances are quite rare as in the "hair" example.
4. Although the surface structure of troughs one and four are quite similar, there are subtle differences in meaning between the two troughs, as in the "salad" example.
5. Although some troughs may remain empty for certain nouns in most cases, the position remains open (with the possibility of being filled at a later stage).

Sentences like "A fish swam by" are in no way intended to form the syllabus for any countability lesson. These sentences merely serve as examples to investigate the potential of nouns to run through the five troughs of the sluice box. Just as a real sluice box diverts water, mud, nuggets of gold, or bits of debris, and facilitates subsequent separation and examination, this countability sluice box diverts sentences from the flow of communication into a temporary rechanneling system. The aim of this device is to allow students to examine sentences which they have encountered in real communication in order to see the similarities and differences between nouns in context. By comparing these sentences to the ones in the sluice box, students can better understand the ways countability might change within a given context, as well as the limitations on this contextual shifting. Looking at nouns in context may help students to see which nouns fall into which trough with regularity, and which instances are rare. In this way, it is hoped that students will build up their own system for describing countability.

The sluice box is a system for observing; it is descriptive, not prescriptive. It cannot classify nouns, but only the environments into which they may fall. The tentative nature of classification by this system is a crucial point of departure from the traditional count/noncount system. Students will see that the word "breads" is not inherently wrong, but may only be appropriate in a certain environment. Students may come to ask themselves more intelligent questions about the countability of nouns. Instead of asking "Is this word count or noncount?," they may ask "Does the countability distinction which I have chosen for this noun correspond to the meaning I want to express?"

I have tried to systematically chip away at the dogma which has lead to a monolithic interpretation of countability. In problem-solving studies, psychologists have found that when subjects cannot generalize about the use of a particular object for a purpose other than the one for which it is expressly intended, solutions are harder to come by. This inability to generalize blocks learning. Psychologists say that the object has a functional fixidity in the mind of the subject. The count/noncount system as it is usually taught in classrooms distorts English countability to the point where the better the students learn the "rules," the higher the risk of countability fixidity. According to Fanselow (in press), generalizations are made by seeing differences and similarities between items and then grouping them in some way. Language is rule-governed behavior, and many of the rules are unconscious ones. Students who do not share this unconscious system or internal network may come to understand it better by generalizing, by making hypotheses based on models or samples of that unconscious system. In proposing the sluice box analysis, I am not interested in creating a new dogma, or a new false dependency on a single system. In this case, I am advancing a tentative type of analysis which can be expanded, contracted, or altered. I am proposing a more subtle analysis which I think students will appreciate, and which teachers may find easier to use. The aim of the sluice box analysis is to reduce grammatical fixidity in teachers as well as students so that the rules discussed in classrooms will better match the real situations students meet outside of class.

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Cross Currents
Vol. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Argumentation and Audience

Daniel Horowitz

Even though most ESL teachers would agree that it is important for students to speak and write logically, few teachers really feel capable of providing direct help in this area. The reason for this may be that while most of us have little or no trouble labelling a given argument as "illogical," it is quite another thing to say exactly what we mean by that, and even more difficult to put our ideas about logic into a form which is useful for language learners. In addition, we are often faced with so many grammatical errors in student writing that we feel that our first responsibility is to fix up the English before we even consider fixing up the logic.

If we are to deal with the latter problem, we need some guiding principle to clarify our ideas about logical argumentation. Such a principle has been expounded by Perelman:

> The speaker can develop his argumentation only by linking it to theses granted by his auditors. . . . It follows that all argumentation depends for its premises—as indeed for its entire development—on that which is accepted, that which is acknowledged as true, as normal and probable, as valid. Thereby it anchors itself in the social, the characterisation of which will depend on the nature of the audience. (1963:156)

Perelman's point here is that the central principle of argumentation is *audience*, that an argument is not logical or illogical per se, but only with respect to a given audience. Intuitively, we know this to be true. Each of us adjusts his or her speech to a given situation

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by making it more or less formal, by altering word choice and so forth; likewise, in daily life we adjust our arguments according to who our listeners are, using more intellectual arguments in formal, professional circles and more emotional ones to appeal to our family and friends.

Applying this principle to ESL, I would say that illogicality in student writing and speaking stems directly from a failure to conceive of argumentative discourse as a communication which must be adjusted according to the audience one is addressing. Students are usually so wrapped up in avoiding error that writing and speaking become more a search for the correct tense than a search for appropriate ideas. One way to remedy this problem is to make awareness of one's audience the central theme of a unit on argumentation. The following unit is offered as one possible model. It can be adjusted and adapted for intermediate to advanced students in a variety of teaching situations.

A Unit On Argumentation

The unit consists of five sections:

I. Choosing a thesis statement for an oral argumentative presentation
II. Arranging arguments to best support that thesis
III. Giving the presentation
IV. Evaluating the presentation as a class
V. Discussing the presentation as a class
VI. Writing an essay supporting the same thesis statement

In each of these sections, students are guided by a set of questions which focus their attention on the communicative nature of argumentation, or, to put it another way, on argumentation as a negotiation between an arguer and an audience.

Choosing a Thesis Statement

In choosing a thesis statement for an oral argumentative presentation, students must keep in mind that a thesis statement is a complete sentence (not a phrase) which presents a point of view on a given topic. The topic itself can range from the personal (It's better to be single than married) to the humorous (Young people should not give up their seats on busses to old people) to the political (The United States should pull its advisors out of Central America), depending on the level and interests of the students. In

addition, students should be guided in their topic choice by considering the following questions:

1. Is the thesis statement controversial? If everyone in the class already agrees with a thesis statement, the speaker would only be wasting everybody's time arguing in favor of it.
2. Are any of the words in the thesis statement too ambiguous? The wording of the thesis statement should make the topic and the speaker's point of view clear to the rest of the class.
3. Do the members of the class really care about the subject? Because many students are easily bored, it is best to choose topics which in some way touch the lives of the people in the class.
4. Is the speaker qualified, in the eyes of his or her classmates, to speak on the subject, either through personal experience, study, or general background knowledge?

When students come to class with the thesis statements they hope to use, the teacher should go around the class asking each student to read his or her statement. The answers to the four questions listed above are then provided by a show of hands from the rest of the class. Teachers should encourage honesty here; if students already agree with, or cannot understand, or do not really care about a thesis statement, the student who offered it should find another one. Choosing a thesis statement which meets these tests is an essential first step in developing students' awareness of their audience.

Arranging Supporting Arguments

Thesis statements fall into two general categories on the basis of the most effective way to arrange the arguments that support them. The first of these two types is called a *judgment* thesis statement. The following are examples of such a thesis statement:

1. It's better to live in a small town than in a big city. (X is better than Y.)
2. Marijuana is not dangerous. [X is (not) a member of class Y.]
3. Studying English is a waste of time. (X can be characterized as Y.)

It can be seen that each of these thesis statements hinges on the definition of a crucial word or phrase: "better" in the first case, "dangerous" in the second, and "waste of time" in the third. In supporting such thesis statements, the arguer must present a defi-

nition of this word or phrase according to the criteria he or she considers important. In other words, the speaker must provide an operational definition of the crucial word. For example, the speaker arguing that it is better to live in a small town than in a big city might define "better" operationally as "having less pollution," "having a lower population density," and "having a lower cost of living." The speaker must then prove to the satisfaction of the audience that when small towns and big cities are compared using these criteria, small towns are indeed superior. In other words, the speaker must show that small towns do, in fact, have less pollution, lower population density, and a lower cost of living than big cities. Although these two steps—stating one's criteria for making a judgment and then applying them to the situation—are not always separated in actual discourse, it is important to think of them as separate. This is because they represent two distinct lines of possible attack against arguments presented in favor of a judgment thesis statement. As a first line of attack, one can say that different criteria should have been chosen. In this case, for example, "number of museums and cinemas," "average salary," and "quality of medical care" are criteria that favor big cities over small towns. A second and distinct line of attack is to claim that the criteria chosen have not been applied fairly in the comparison. For example, one might argue that small towns are just as polluted, crowded, and expensive as large cities.

After stating the criteria for judgment and applying them to the situation, a speaker should finish the presentation by attempting to anticipate any objections which the audience might have to the thesis statement.

In summary, then, a speaker supporting a judgment thesis statement must answer these questions to the satisfaction of his or her audience: What criteria should be used to support this judgment? How are the crucial words to be defined? How do these criteria apply to the actual situation? What objections might the audience have to this thesis?

The second type of thesis statement is a *call for a change*. These thesis statements usually contain the word "should," as in:

1. Children should not be permitted to watch television.
2. Couples should live together before marriage.
3. The death penalty should be abolished.

There are two basic ways to support "call for a change" thesis statements: a needs approach and a comparative advantages approach. A needs approach is taken when a speaker believes that the change is *necessary* because there are significant problems with the present way of doing things. A comparative advantages approach, on the other hand, is appropriate when a speaker believes that the change is *desirable* because it would result in significant advantages over the present way of doing things. A needs approach emphasizes present problems, in the sense of "we cannot continue doing what we are now doing," while a comparative advantages approach emphasizes future advantages, as in "the present system is adequate, but a change would be significantly better." It should be noted here that almost any "call for a change" thesis statement can be approached either way, and that the decision as to which approach to use is more a practical than a theoretical one; each student should choose the approach which he or she feels will work best.

A student who takes a needs approach must answer these crucial questions: What is the present system like? What are the problems with the present system that compel us to change it? What system should we replace the present one with? How would this plan solve the problems in the present system? Will the new plan create any serious new problems? (Here the speaker should try to anticipate arguments against the plan and present counter-arguments.) Is the new plan practical?

A student who takes a comparative advantages approach must answer these questions: What is the new plan being proposed? What significant advantages does the new plan have over the present system? Exactly how would these advantages follow from the plan? Why is it impossible to realize these advantages under the present system? Would the new plan create any serious new problems? (Here the speaker should try to anticipate arguments against the plan and present counter-arguments.) Is the new plan practical?

By answering these questions, a speaker anticipates and satisfies general patterns of expectation in an audience when it is faced with an attempt at persuasion. Three further points might also be made about these questions. First, they may need to be slightly modified or individualized for each thesis statement. Second, depending on the thesis statement, some of the questions will carry more weight than others. A final point to be made is that it is not

necessary for a student to answer the questions one by one, although it is essential that the answers to these questions be clear to the audience by the end of each presentation.

Giving the Presentation

Teachers should help students prepare for their presentations by reminding them of a few important points regarding speaking to a small group. Of course, students must speak loudly enough for everyone to hear. They should also maintain eye contact with the audience. Students should be required to speak from an outline rather than from a written text and encouraged to practice their presentations aloud several times before they actually give them. A time limit (five to ten minutes, for example) should be announced and students should be reminded to stay within this limit.

Evaluating the Presentation as a Class

As for evaluation, the feedback should come only from the audience and not directly from the teacher, although teachers may want to audiotape or videotape presentations for later private conferences with students. The following form, or a variation, could be given out after each presentation (but before the class discussion), with the first two sections, "Speaker" and "Message," to be filled out anonymously by each member of the class:

EVALUATION: ARGUMENTATIVE PRESENTATION

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
SPEAKER				
A. The speaker's voice was interesting and varied.	DS	D	A	AS
B. The speaker's gestures and body movements were appropriate.	DS	D	A	AS
C. The speaker maintained sufficient eye contact with the audience.	DS	D	A	AS
D. The speaker had something important to say on this topic.	DS	D	A	AS
MESSAGE				
A. The speaker's thesis statement was clear.	DS	D	A	AS

B. The presentation was well organized.	DS	D	A	AS
C. The speaker's arguments were logical.	DS	D	A	AS
D. The speaker's arguments were well chosen for this audience.	DS	D	A	AS
E. The speaker intelligently considered other points of view.	DS	D	A	AS
F. I was interested in this presentation.	DS	D	A	AS

PERSUASIVENESS

A. After the presentation, the speaker defended his/her point of view well.	DS	D	A	AS
B. This presentation made me think about new ideas.	DS	D	A	AS
C. This presentation made me change my mind.	YES	NO	I already agreed with the thesis statement.	

D. My overall rating for this presentation is: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The final section, "Persuasiveness," should be completed after the class discussion (to be discussed below). After collecting all the evaluations at the end of the class period, the teacher should tabulate the answers to each question and give the speaker a summary of the results. The completion of this type of evaluation is another step in the process of building students' audience awareness. It emphasizes that a speaker's responsibility is to the entire class, and not just to the teacher. As for the problem of students evaluating each other too favorably for fear that negative responses might hurt their classmate's grade, this can be circumvented by making it clear that they alone will evaluate the speaker and that no grade will be given by the teacher. This will hopefully free them to look upon the evaluation as a way to give their classmate constructive criticism, helping him or her to improve future performances by becoming conscious of weaknesses. After the presentation and the completion of the first two sections of the evaluation form, a sufficient amount of time should be allotted for a question and answer period. In preparation for this, students should be told that

although the oral presentation itself will not be graded, a written essay supporting the same thesis statement will be. This essay, however, must be more than a mere rehash of the oral presentation. It must demonstrate a deeper, more complete and more persuasive understanding of the thesis statement; it must, in other words, be a major improvement over the oral presentation. This can be achieved only by having the class critically discuss the arguments presented by the speaker, including the strong points and the weak points. This once again reinforces in the mind of the speaker the need to be persuasive with respect to a specific audience, namely his or her classmates.

Many ESL teachers are aware of a certain reluctance on the part of a student's classmates to criticize that student. If, however, the class is told that their criticism and comments are crucial to the speaker's ability to write the essay (which itself is a major assignment), that the presentation is not a finished product but merely the speaker's attempt to put his or her ideas forth in the forum of the classroom, and that the collective and cooperative intelligence of the class is needed to improve each student's essay, then criticism is no longer seen as negative but rather as a positive contribution. And this is possible only if, as was suggested before, no grade is given by the teacher on the presentation itself.

Discussing the Presentation as a Class

In order to facilitate the question and answer period, both teacher and students should take notes during the presentation. The teacher's job during the discussion is to be the moderator or facilitator, to keep the discussion on course and to make sure that questions and answers are fully understood by asking follow-up questions if necessary, or better yet, by guiding students to do so. Ideally, the teacher stays out of the discussion entirely, but this is an ideal rather than a prescription. Generally, the amount of teacher guidance will be determined by the level of the class, by the ability of the speaker to guide the discussion without the teacher's aid, and by the clarity of the presentation.

During the class discussion, the speaker should take notes on the comments of his fellow students, who should be encouraged to offer not only objections and criticisms, but also strong arguments in favor of the speaker's thesis which have been overlooked. These notes should be used when writing the essay.

Writing the Essay

Students should be discouraged from writing out their essays before giving their oral presentation, since the main goal of the presentation is to allow the student to get feedback on his or her ideas in order to be able to write a cogent argumentative essay. If the teacher has enough time, it is a good idea to give each student a copy of his or her talk, transcribed from the audio or video tape, to use as a first draft of the essay. As emphasized before, the essay must be a major revision of this first draft. (This in itself is valuable practice for students, who too often believe that a piece of writing is finished when it has been put onto paper for the first time.) The teacher will probably want to specify a given number of days after the presentation as the due date for the essay.

In summary, the principle objective of this unit is to increase students' awareness of the central role which an audience plays in discovering, arranging, and presenting arguments. In each of the steps discussed, students must deal with the audience being addressed: thesis statements are accepted only if they are appropriate for the student's audience (his or her classmates); arguments are arranged in such a way that they conform to an audience's expectations; the presentation is given in a way that makes it as easy as possible for the audience to understand; the presentation is evaluated only by the audience; the speaker's arguments are put through the fire of the class's collective criticism; and the final essay, from the genesis of its ideas to its final writing, is conditioned by an awareness of the real people who constitute the writer's audience. Although this unit is not a guaranteed formula for success, it involves students actively in the process of argumentation as negotiation, and in that sense, whatever the specific outcome, it can be a valuable experience.

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Cross Currents
Vol. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Some Problems of Teaching Spoken English in Japan

Tomoo Tsukamoto

The general environment for teaching English in Japan has changed for the better in recent years, due mainly to growing enthusiasm among Japanese people. Progress, however, is still frustratingly slow. "Why teach spoken English?" is a question often raised among the general public. At first, the answer seems obvious: "Of course, we must learn English. It is an international language and Japanese people must become more internationally-minded by learning to speak it," is a typical reaction. Many commercial language institutes and private English tutors in Japan are thriving because of this belief that one must strive unquestioningly to master the English language.

Still, an undercurrent of die-hard resistance exists with regard to learning, speaking, and teaching English. Kurihara (1981) observes that there is a general fear among the Japanese people of becoming proficient in English or any other prominent European language. For the Japanese, such a fear stems from a deep-rooted psychological barrier. Apparently, many feel that as one becomes fluent in a foreign language one is bound to lose some part of one's "Japaneseness."

Although Japanese society is now more cosmopolitan than ever before, many writers point out that the notion of "Japaneseness" remains almost sacred in Japan. This unshakable belief in Japaneseness creates a stumbling block when learning a foreign language. Miller explains:

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> Learning a foreign language inevitably involves changing one's own language for another, if only for intervals of a few seconds. This necessity, which is inherent in all language-learning situations, immediately comes into sharp confrontation with the culture's passive acceptance of its own language as a necessary and inevitable portion of the very fact of being Japanese by race and birth.
>
> (1977:78)

Japanese who have acquired a fair degree of foreign language proficiency, and especially those who have lived in a foreign country, can attest to the difficulties of being a foreign language speaker in Japan. In one way or another, they have been harassed by their fellow Japanese, because of minor deviations in their speech or mannerisms. For example, children who have spent a number of years overseas often have difficulty upon returning to Japan. Their problem is attributed not only to the complicated and arduous process of readjusting to the homeland culture, but also to the general lack of understanding and compassion among their peers. It is reported that as the numbers of returnee children increase each year, many of them resort to violence and disruptive behavior as a result of pent-up frustrations.

Effective Communication

In general, the Japanese are not very successful in their attempts to communicate with non-Japanese. They are often regarded as distant, cool, and overly cautious. Conversations with the Japanese may seem endless and pointless (Loveday 1980). The Japanese themselves are aware of this reputation and come away from international encounters in low spirits, mainly because their unsatisfactory performance at social events convinces them more than ever that they cannot speak English well. This serves to reinforce the popular notion that the Japanese are poor foreign language speakers.

Neustupný, a Czechoslovakian Japanologist, offers the following equation to describe how most Japanese people feel about communication in a foreign language:

$$\text{grammar} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{syntax} \\ \text{vocabulary} \\ \text{pronunciation} \\ \text{alphabetical symbols} \end{array} \right\} = \text{language} = \text{communication}$$

(1982:41)

With this equation, Neustupný implies that the Japanese see grammar not simply as a set of rules by which words and sentences are put together, but rather as a loose combination of syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and alphabetical symbols. In the eyes of the Japanese, this is language, and acquiring each one of these elements will lead to successful communication. Neustupný explains that this naive view of language and communication is seriously flawed. Many Japanese people fail to realize that most of the international problems they encounter stem largely from a poor ability to communicate and not necessarily from weaknesses in linguistic areas. In other words, it is not a case of "I can't communicate because I can't speak English well,"—an excuse many Japanese tend to give—but most probably, as Neustupný points out, a case of "I can't speak English well because I haven't learned how to communicate well" (1982:41).

The EFL/ESL instructor is responsible not only for the linguistic development of his students but also for their healthy growth in nonlinguistic areas. Social rules and nonverbal behavior are, admittedly, extremely hard for the EFL/ESL student to master. Westerners, in general, are inhibited about reminding other adults about elementary matters of etiquette which they feel should have been learned at childhood. However, these seemingly elementary matters can be a potential source of misunderstanding and friction in cross-cultural encounters. It is a disservice to students if a teacher does not teach or provide opportunities to learn these cultural or sociolinguistic aspects of the English language. The fact is that certain social rules, taken for granted by a native speaker, tend to be of great importance for successful international communication.

English as an International Language

As a vehicle of international communication, English is employed in various kinds of personal interactions, for example: (1) between two native speakers, such as two Americans or an American and an Australian; (2) between a native speaker and a non-native speaker (for example, a Japanese and a Briton); and (3) between two non-native speakers such as a Japanese and a Thai (Nakayama 1980). This third type of interaction is increasing in importance. Japanese, in particular, can be expected to encounter this type of situation more frequently, as business and tourism (the two most prominent examples of Japanese activities overseas) are certain to

increase on a global basis. It is all the more necessary, therefore, to consider the teaching model in an international setting. A historical perspective of English language teaching in Japan illustrates this point.

During the turbulent years of the late nineteenth century, Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of a prominent private university in Tokyo, visited a European merchant ship anchored at a Japanese port. He wished to try out his Dutch, which he had studied for a long time and which was practically the only European language being studied in Japan at that time. To his great surprise and dismay, he found his knowledge of Dutch was of no use; the language used among the merchants and sailors—or at least among those who travelled to the Far East in the late nineteenth century—was English, the language of the British Empire. From that time until quite recently, the form of English taught in Japanese classrooms was the British variety of English and only scant attention was given to other varieties.

Although American English acquired some prominence and value in the confusion of the postwar era in Japan, it remained downgraded. It was given the derogatory nickname "Meriken English"—a reference to the everyday language spoken by the soliders of the American Occupation Army. Since the Occupation, the process of replacing British English with American English has accelerated. The status of American English in Japan has improved considerably due to a multitude of factors including: (1) the political influence of General MacArthur and his powerful staff; (2) the Jazz Boom, which had a great impact on Japanese popular music; (3) the more recent rock 'n' roll craze and the subsequent emergence of pop culture; and (4) the ever-increasing flow of people on all levels—political, academic, and cultural. The tourism boom has also been an important factor.

All these phenomena have helped to create a tremendous about-face in the attitude of the Japanese toward Americans in general and the variety of English they speak. It is now relatively easy to find a speaker of American English in Tokyo. The American variety of English currently enjoys the status of "the model" in the majority of teaching/learning situations in Japan. British English is still accessible through BBC short-wave broadcasting, British Council cultural activities, and a few private language institutes specializing in teaching British English. However, its status has diminished con-

siderably. On the other hand, one should not be confined to regionalism. Neither American nor British English should be the only models. One must recognize different forms of English or "new Englishes" (Pride 1982) now being spoken in many different parts of the world. A progressive view dictates that the English language should no longer be the sole possession of the British and the Americans. All the other speakers of English, whether they be Nigerians, Singaporeans, Indians, or Pakistanis, should be recognized as native speakers of English, as long as English is their first language. No variety is either superior or inferior, only slightly different from the others (Smith 1976; Suzuki 1979; Baxter 1980). Imon (1983) thinks very highly of what he calls ASEAN English. The South-East Asian variety of English, spoken chiefly by the people of Malaysia. Singapore, and the Philippines, serves as a regional *lingua franca* and moreover, as he points out, it proves to be quite serviceable even outside the region. It deserves more serious attention because, as Imon says, it could be used as a production model for the Japanese learner.

This is not to say, however, that ASEAN English or any other teaching model must replace the major classroom model in Japan. On the contrary, American or British English can be maintained as the speech model, with students being exposed to other subordinate models such as ASEAN English. It would be most unwise for a Japanese businessman, shortly to be stationed in Hong Kong or Singapore, to undergo exclusively American-oriented linguistic training under an American teacher with American-made texts and audio-visual material. The most appropriate pre-assignment orientation would be for him to acquire a standard form of English with some attention to the local or regional linguistic variety.

The Japanese Variety of English

A great number of Japanese teachers of English scarcely perceive themselves as being speakers of English. When they speak English they become extremely self-conscious and nervous as if they are using somebody else's property. When they are speaking English they seem to be telling themselves that Japanese is their language, but not English (Baxter 1980:37). No wonder students inherit the same self-defeating perception, with English always remaining "not mine." Furthermore, Japanese English teachers tend to regard English as merely a school subject, serving little communi-

cative function outside the classroom. The focus in the classroom is on literature and the arts (which many would argue are of little practical value), and translation is the dominant methodology in such teaching situations.

A complete turnabout can be made by declaring that one is a speaker of the Japanese variety of English, and that English belongs to anyone who functions in an English-speaking situation (Baxter 1980:43). Even a casual observer would not fail to notice the fact that in today's Japan, English is being used extensively, both in spoken and written form, in government, business circles, and higher education. It has a definite status and is tied to Japan's present needs and future goals (Baxter 1980:49). As Japan matures and becomes more international, so must Japanese methods of teaching English.

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Cross Currents
Vol. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Bright Ideas

Using Popularity Contests in ESL/EFL

Michael "Rube" Redfield

Japanese professional baseball is arguably the most popular sport in a very sports-minded country. Old and young of both sexes follow it avidly, and so do most of the ESL students there. Everyone seems to have a favorite team and favorite players. In Japan, as in America, it is the fans who elect the leagues' All-Star teams, using in both cases official forms provided free at all league ballparks. The All-Star teams are a selection of the best players in each of the leagues and are chosen for the midsummer All-Star games. We can take advantage of student interest and the balloting procedure and incorporate them in a teaching technique that combines form, function, and interaction with authentic materials.

Of course, not everyone follows baseball as avidly as the Japanese; however, many countries hold events that can be readily adapted to the technique described below. For example, soccer pools are very popular in Europe and Latin America, while in America, in addition to sports contests, there are the Oscar, Emmy, and Grammy Awards. Since this technique was originally developed in Japan, I will describe how I used it in that particular cultural context.

I start the class out with a general discussion on professional baseball. This first of all allows me to determine if this activity might be appropriate for my class, and if it is, the discussion focuses student interest on the topic. It also functions as an excellent warm-up activity, since in my classroom there are usually a lot of real fans with a lot to say. I ask the students which teams they support, and then turn the discussion to the All-Star Games (there are actually three in Japan). After establishing the topic and arousing interest, I pass out either the official All-Star balloting forms, or written lists of the names of prominent players, divided by playing position.

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Next, the words and phrases needed for the activity are presented; for example, "I nominate . . . ," "I second the nomination," "I vote for. . . ." Once these have been introduced and practiced, I like to appoint a student who is not a fan to act as monitor and scribe. This student can then lead the preliminary voting, which should be done by playing position. After the first vote, players who receive few votes are eliminated, leaving two, or at most three, contenders for each position. Then I divide the class into "supporter sections," with students who favor the same player or players grouped together. Each group should be given plenty of time to come up with good arguments to persuade the rest of the class to vote for their favorites. I try to act as a resource person during this phase of the activity, providing translations, key words and expressions, as well as occasionally providing vital statistics gleaned from any one of the numerous daily sports newspapers. When the students have had ample preparation time each group can try to convince the others that their choices are the best ones.

At this point a final vote is taken, with the student/monitor tallying the results and filling out the official ballot in the name of the class. Dissenting students should of course feel free to fill out their own individual ballots with their own preferences.

The All-Star Balloting activity leads naturally to a lot of follow-up work. Students can be asked to bring in the weekly totals as they are reported in the newspapers. Students can attend the games themselves or watch them on television, and the results can also be discussed and debated in class.

The selection process in other sports and in other countries varies from that described above. However, these events should offer many of the same kinds of opportunities to involve students in an activity that creates high interest by using a topic that is not only from the real world but also one in which the students have a degree of emotional involvement. There will be many opportunities to introduce and practice the language of, for example, comparison, persuasion, reasoning, and speculation.

Granted, the All-Star Balloting activity may not be for every class or all teachers. (And not for all seasons either. All-Star Balloting starts in May and the games are played in July.) It is not intellectual or academic, but it is an authentic, interesting activity that combines acquiring skills along with abundant opportunities to practice them on a topic that I suspect is "deep" (in Stevick's

terminology) for many of our secondary and adult ESL students. And in Japan, if you fill out the official form and send it in, your class might even win a prize!

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Business English Skills: The Evaluation Meeting

Brian Tobin

In a communicative approach to language learning, the acquisition of interaction skills is particularly useful for those EFL/ESL or ESP students who will someday find themselves working closely in group situations with other speakers of English. International conferences, seminars, and board meetings are examples of such situations and require active participation and smooth interaction between members of the group. To the many non-English-speaking businesspeople and engineers who study English today in order to communicate more effectively in business situations, the EFL teacher in a business English skills (BES) curriculum can be of great help by incorporating meaningful simulations in classroom exercises. There is a wide variety of published material on simulations for EFL available; the purpose of this Bright Idea is to suggest one further activity which can help to reinforce interactive communication skills.

This activity is based on the "quality circle" approach to problem solving and evaluation which enjoys tremendous popularity in American, European, and Japanese companies. In the quality circle, a small group of participants meets to share ideas on a particular topic or problem, evaluate the various aspects and components of it, and propose solutions or recommendations for future action. The emphasis is on 100% participation and effective communication. For native speakers of a language, the constant addition of new information and ideas, numerous interruptions, requests for clarification or repetition, and so forth, make smooth conversation difficult to achieve; when non-native speakers are added as group participants, communication itself is in danger of breaking down completely. Therefore, as a language-learning exercise, EFL students in a BES class can be given the opportunity to discuss and evaluate a topic which is meaningful to them in a business meeting format. In my classroom, this took the form of a business meeting in which the students evaluated the language training that they had received.

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My classes generally consisted of six to eight businessmen and engineers from top Japanese companies. Their language training was often intended to prepare them for overseas assignments, and the curriculum was flexible enough to allow introduction and reinforcement of whatever linguistic and communicative skills the students' future business activities would demand. Examples of such skills are: using the telephone for business purposes, giving presentations, developing and maintaining cross-cultural awareness, handling quantitative information in English, and participation in problem-solving business meetings. It is this last activity which I will explain in detail here.

Preparation and Groundwork

In the first three weeks of a month-long intensive language program, I introduced basic interaction skills in the classroom as students needed them. For example, asking for clarification, persuading, suggesting, agreeing, disagreeing, restating one's opinion, asking for repetition, interrupting politely, and opening and closing a meeting were covered. In these first weeks, simple problems were assigned for discussion, and I listened for difficulties with the target "gambit" phrases. After each of these "business meetings," we discussed problem areas. It is a good idea to categorize and list the gambit phrases on large sheets of paper which can be posted on the walls of the classroom. This has been a long-standing practice at my school, and a very effective one as well, for it allows the students to refer to the lists when the need arises, and serves as a constant reminder of the skills to be mastered. On the other hand, higher level students should be discouraged from depending too heavily on these lists.

The Evaluation Meeting

On the final day of class, the students were asked to conduct one last meeting, in which they were invited, as a group, to evaluate every aspect of the BES instruction that they had received. (Although I was always present at the meeting, I made it clear that I was to be ignored entirely, in order to encourage spontaneous and frank interaction; fortunately, my students always obliged me in this way.) It is this evaluation meeting which is based on the quality circle theme, and most of the students were already familiar with the approach, albeit in a Japanese linguistic and cultural context.

In eight such evaluation meetings, a familiar pattern emerged. The meetings invariably began with one student, acting as chairman, (either appointed by the group or the teacher) soliciting each participant's opinions in turn. There was usually very little volunteering of personal opinions or overt criticism at this early stage. Not surprisingly, this is similar to proceedings in a Japanese company's quality circle, which I have since had the opportunity to observe. But interestingly, at some point in the meeting, one or two of the participants would dare to venture a criticism of some aspect of the class, such as "We needed more time for telephone practice." Once the ice had been broken in this way, what usually followed were more opinions, criticisms, and suggestions for improvement. Many of the newly-acquired interaction phrases were used naturally as the students agreed, disagreed, and interrupted each other. The meetings almost always took longer than expected, reflecting the students' enthusiasm and investment in the activity.

This evaluation meeting is valuable to both the teacher and the students. The teacher benefits from the students' honest criticisms and suggestions on how to improve the curriculum in such a way as to best meet the needs of his or her future BES students. The students of course benefit by reinforcing the necessary polite interaction skills which will be demanded of them if called upon to function abroad.

This activity can be expanded to fit other EFL situations as well. For example, with a group of advanced ESP students, it might be incorporated near the beginning of the course to better determine the needs of the students. It can also be done in the middle of the course to uncover problems in the curriculum which might not be evident to the teacher. In any case, the evaluation meeting has proven to be a worthwhile and popular activity in my BES classes and I would recommend it to any EFL teacher working with a similar curriculum.

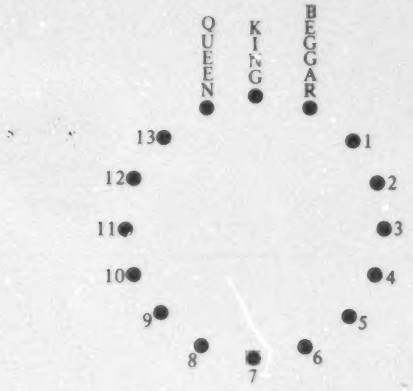
Rhythm in the EFL Class

Michiko Shinohara

One day, while visiting an American high school in St. Louis, I happened to see some students playing a game called *Rhythm*. I realized that it was almost the same game as *Osama to Kojiki* (King and Beggar), a game often played by Japanese children, and I had the idea of using it in my EFL class. Since then, I have successfully used it in various types of EFL classes in Japan. The game is suitable for students of all ages and levels (from elementary to advanced). It can be used for class periods of twenty to sixty minutes and in classes which have ten to thirty students.

How To Play the Game

The students sit in a circle. One of them is the Beggar, the student sitting next to the Beggar is the King, and the one sitting next to the King is the Queen. All of the other students have a number. The person sitting next to the Beggar is Number One, the next person is Number Two and so on.



First, everyone pats his or her knees twice, and the Beggar says "Beggar" (snapping the fingers of his or her right hand) and any one of the other numbers. For example, he might say "five."

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At the same time he or she snaps the fingers of his or her left hand. Then all of the students pat their knees twice and the person who is Number Five says "five ten" for example, and snaps his or her fingers. The game continues with everyone saying his or her own number and another player's number, for example, "ten three," "three King," "King six," "six Queen," and so on. If someone fails to respond promptly or cannot say clearly what he or she is supposed to say, that person has to move down to the Beggar's seat, and everyone who has a lower number than this person (including the Beggar) can move up. Now the students have a new number and the game starts again with a new Beggar. The goal of each student is to become King and stay there as long as possible.

Advantages of Using the Game

When elementary or intermediate students talk to native English speakers they become nervous and sometimes tend to give most of their attention to grammar or content, and to forget about pronunciation. This game, in a sense, gives the students a chance to practice their pronunciation in a high-stress situation; that is, the more the students are involved in the game and the more excited they get, the less attention they pay to pronunciation. Students often tend to use Japanese sound equivalents, saying "suree" instead of "three," "fai-bu" instead of "five," and "eito" instead of "eight." If their pronunciation is corrected in the course of the game the students actually do a repetition drill camouflaged as a game. In other words, they are given a challenging opportunity to practice making the right sounds.

Another advantage is that if the game is played at a fast pace students will not have time to think about what they are going to say in both Japanese and English. Therefore they will form the habit of thinking in English without even realizing it. Furthermore, when the atmosphere in the class is tense (perhaps because students do not know each other very well yet), the game really helps to relax them. It also helps to diminish the distance between the teacher and the students. The teacher not only plays the game as an equal but also points out students' pronunciation errors and corrects them. However, keeping up with the other players is an extremely difficult task for the teacher when his or her attention is focused on the students' pronunciation. As a result, the teacher may have to take the Beggar's seat more often than the students

would expect. This helps to create a good relationship between the students and the teacher.

Some of the common mistakes students make are: 1) saying large numbers which are not being used; 2) saying two numbers almost at the same time; and 3) mistakenly answering in the belief that one's own number has been called. Attempting to avoid these mistakes may develop students' ability to concentrate (especially very young students).

Variations

If the group is large, more non-number seats, such as Prince or Princess, can be designated. Or, if the group is a small one, other vocabulary can be used instead of numbers; for example, the days of the week, the names of the months, or the names of vegetables, to mention only a few.

If a class tends to have many pronunciation problems, sending every student who mispronounces a word to the Beggar's seat would disrupt the game. In such cases, the *Shikkoyuyo* (Probation) Rule can be applied; that is, when a student mispronounces a word or words the first time, he or she is put on "probation," and the game continues; if the same student makes another mistake, then he or she is sent to the Beggars' seat. It is worthwhile remembering that there are some people, especially among the elderly, who have a poor sense of rhythm. In order to have a smooth game, these people can be designated *omiso* (someone given an advantage). Instead of penalizing the person in question, the class follows his or her rhythm for a moment and then goes back to the normal rhythm.

In my experience, a sixty-year-old person can enjoy the game as much as a ten-year-old child. Everyone, including shyer or less advanced students, can take part if the class is not too big. As a result, the students normally have a great time with their teacher—as long as the teacher next door does not storm into the room to complain about the ruckus!

Cross Currents
Vol. XI, No. 2
Fall 1984

Book Reviews

FACES: EXCHANGING VIEWS IN ENGLISH (AN INTEGRATED LANGUAGE COURSE). Andrew Blasky and Elizabeth Chafcouloff. Tokyo: Lingual House Publishing Company, 1985. Pp. 96; and Cassette.

Faces is a useful and versatile new text designed for English conversation classes. I have used parts of this text in conversation classes at the Language Institute of Japan, and find it to be suitable for a wide range of students, from high beginner to advanced.

The book is divided into fifteen chapters, and each chapter is devoted to a single topic. The topics range from the everyday (for example, leisure time) to the controversial and sophisticated (for example, sexual equality). Each chapter contains a number of different exercises and activities which are designed to prepare the student for free discussion of the topic. These include reading and writing exercises, practicing new vocabulary and grammar, and listening comprehension. The final section of each chapter consists of discussion questions and an activity or role play which also promotes free discussion. A cassette tape accompanies the book.

The most outstanding feature of this book is that its topical material is taken from the experiences of ten real-life English speakers from various parts of the world. Some of them are native speakers, others are not. By using British, American, Canadian, Australian, and non-native speakers, the book exposes students to a variety of accents and speaking styles, demonstrating that English is truly an international language. In the reading passages of each chapter, some of the speakers present their views about the topic in question. For example, in the chapter entitled "School Days," four of the speakers present some of their impressions about their school days. The reading passages are followed by a short exercise which is designed to test the student's general comprehension.

On the tape, some of the speakers take part in a conversation about the topic. In the chapter entitled "Beliefs" for example, five of the speakers talk about religion in their native countries. These conversations are spontaneous, unscripted, and most importantly, interesting to listen to. The conversations are followed by a short multiple choice exercise which tests comprehension.

The book can be used either as a complete conversation course, or as part of a curriculum which includes conversational English. In the case of the latter type of curriculum, isolated units can be used in conjunction with other material. I used several of the chapters with students who were themselves English teachers in Japanese high schools. I consider it a true measure of this book's success that the teachers responded to these lessons as well as my other students did.

In terms of difficulty, the reading exercises and the taped conversations were very challenging for my high beginner students, but they were not overwhelming. The accompanying exercises are not difficult, so my students were not unduly discouraged. They found the listening particularly difficult, because the tape consists of spontaneous conversational English spoken at normal speed by people with a wide variety of accents. They had to listen two or three times before they could comprehend the gist of a conversation. However, the questions which accompany the listening passages are not very difficult; by answering these questions, my students felt confident that they had understood the tape. My intermediate students also felt challenged by this material. I suspect that upper intermediate and advanced students would find the reading and listening sections stimulating as well.

The "Warming Up" section of each chapter is designed to increase students' fluency. The students work in pairs asking each other simple questions about the topic. For example, in the chapter entitled "Sexual Equality," my students asked each other, "In your country, is it possible for a woman to become a doctor?" Each chapter contains a section entitled "Expressions," which allows the students to work with new grammar, vocabulary, notions, and functions. For example, when I worked on the chapter on "Sexual Equality," my students learned the language of agreement and disagreement. Although most of the exercises were very useful for my high beginner students, some of them were too easy for my intermediate students and I omitted them.

I found this book to be very effective in achieving its stated goal, which is to direct students toward free conversation. After completing the preliminary exercises, my usually reticent high beginner students were able to talk about abstract topics such as racial discrimination and sexual equality. With my intermediate students, I was able to omit some of the preliminary exercises and still reach

the same goal. With more advanced students, the lessons could be tailored accordingly. All in all, *Faces* is a valuable tool for the ESL classroom.

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